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WITH

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BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

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A DIS

THE TAMARACK

A DISSERTATION

UPON THE

GREEK COMEDY,

Translated from BRUMOY*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I CONCLUDE this work according to my promise, with an account of the Comic Theatre, and intreat the reader, whether a favourer or an enemy of the ancient Drama, not to paſs his cenſure upon the authors or upon me, without a regular peruſal of

* Publiſhed by Mrs. Lennox in 4to, 1759. To the third volume of this work the following Advertiſement is prefixed. "In this "volume, the Diſcourſe on the Greek Comedy, and the General "Concluſion, are tranſlated by the celebrated author of the Rambler. The Comedy of the Birds, and that of Peace, by a young "Gentleman. The Comedy of the Frogs, by the learned and ingenious Dr. Gregory Sharpe. The Diſcourſe upon the Cyclops, "by John Bourrya, Eſq. The Cyclops, by Dr. Grainger, author of the tranſlation of Tibullus." E.

this whole work. For, though it ſeems to be compoſed of pieces of which each may precede or follow without dependance upon the other, yet all the parts, taken together, form a ſyſtem which would be deſtroyed by their disjunction. Which way ſhall we come at the knowledge of the ancients, ſhews, but by comparing together all that is left of them? The value and neceſſity of this compariſon determined me to publiſh all, or to publiſh nothing. Beſides, the reflections on each piece, and on the general taſte of antiquity, which, in my opinion, are not without importance, have a kind of obſcure gradation, which I have carefully endeavoured to preſerve, and of which the thread would be loſt by him who ſhould ſlightly glance ſometimes upon one piece, and ſometimes upon another. It is a ſtructure which I have endeavoured to make as near to regularity as I could, and which muſt be ſeen in its full extent and in proper ſucceſſion. The reader who ſkips here and there over the book, might make a hundred objections which are either anticipated, or anſwered in thoſe pieces which he might have overlooked. I have laid ſuch ſtreſs upon the connection of the parts of this work, that I have declined to exhauſt the ſubject, and have ſuppreſſed many of my notions, that I might leave the judicious reader to pleaſe himſelf by forming ſuch concluſions as I ſuppoſed him like to diſcover, as well as myſelf. I am not here attempting to prejudice the reader by an apology either for the ancients, or my own manner. I have not claimed a right of obliging others to determine, by my opinion, the degrees of eſteem which I think due to the authors of the Athenian Stage; nor do I think that their reputation in the preſent time,

 ought

ought to depend upon my mode of thinking or expressing my thoughts, which I leave entirely to the judgment of the publick.

A
DISSERTATION, &c.

Reasons why *Aristophanes* may be reviewed without translating him entirely.

I. I WAS in doubt a long time, whether I should meddle at all with the *Greek* comedy, both, because the pieces which remain are very few, the licentiousness of *Aristophanes*, their author, is exorbitant, and it is very difficult to draw from the performances of a single poet, a just idea of *Greek* comedy. Besides, it seemed that tragedy was sufficient to employ all my attention, that I might give a complete representation of that kind of writing, which was most esteemed by the *Athenians* and the wiser *Greeks* *, particularly by *Socrates*, who set no value upon comedy or comick actors. But the very name of that drama, which in polite ages, and above all others in our own, has been so much advanced, that it has become equal to tragedy, if not preferable, incline me to think that I may be partly reproached with an imperfect work, if, after having

* There was a law which forbad any judge of the *Areopagus* to write comedy.

gone as deep as I could into the nature of *Greek* tragedy, I did not at leaſt ſketch a draught of the comedy.

I then conſidered, that it was not wholly impoſſible to ſurmount, at leaſt in part, the difficulties which had ſtopt me, and to go ſomewhat farther than the learned writers *, who have publiſhed in *French* ſome pieces of *Ariſtophanes*; not that I pretend to make large tranſlations. The ſame reaſons which have hindered with reſpect to the more noble parts of the *Greek* drama, operate with double force upon my preſent ſubject. Though ridicule, which is the buſineſs of comedy, be not leſs uniform in all times, than the paſſions which are moved by tragick compoſitions; yet, if diverſity of manners may ſometimes diſguiſe the paſſions themſelves, how much greater change will be made in jocularities? The truth is, that they are ſo much changed by the courſe of time, that pleaſantry and ridicule become dull and flat much more eaſily than the pathetick becomes ridiculous.

That which is commonly known by the term jocular and comick, is nothing but a turn of expreſſion, an airy phantom, that muſt be caught at a particular point. As we loſe this point, we loſe the jocularity, and find nothing but dulneſs in its place. A lucky ſally, which has filled a company with laughter, will have no effect in print, becauſe it is ſhewn ſingle and ſeparate from the circumſtance which gave it force. Many ſatirical jeſts, found in ancient books, have had the ſame fate; their ſpirit has evaporated by time, and have left nothing to us but inſipidity.

* Madame *Dacier*, M. *Boivin*.

None

None but the most biting passages have preserved their points unblunted.

But, besides this objection, which extends universally to all translations of *Aristophanes*, and many allusions of which time has deprived us, there are loose expressions thrown out to the populace to raise laughter from corrupt passions, which are unworthy of the curiosity of decent readers, and which ought to rest eternally in proper obscurity. Not every thing in this infancy of comedy was excellent, at least it would not appear excellent at this distance of time, in comparison of compositions of the same kind, which lie before our eyes; and this is reason enough to save me the trouble of translating, and the reader that of perusing. As for that small number of writers who delight in those delicacies, they give themselves very little trouble about translations, except it be to find fault with them; and the majority of people of wit, like comedies that may give them pleasure, without much trouble of attention, and are not much disposed to find beauties in that which requires long deductions to find it beautiful. If *Helen* had not appeared beautiful to the *Greeks* and *Trojans* but by force of argument, we had never been told of the *Trojan* war.

On the other side, *Aristophanes* is an author more considerable than one would imagine. The History of *Greece* could not pass over him, when it comes to touch upon the people of *Athens*; this alone might procure him respect, even when he was not considered as a comick poet. But when his writings are taken into view, we find him the only author from whom may be drawn a just idea of the comedy of his

 age;

age; and farther, we find in his pieces, that he often makes attacks upon the tragick writers, particularly upon the three chief, whose valuable remains we have had under examination; and, what is yet worse, fell sometimes upon the state, and upon the gods themselves.

The chief heads of this discourse.

II. These considerations have determined me to follow, in my representation of this writer, the same method which I have taken in several tragick pieces, which is that of giving an exact analysis as far as the matter would allow, from which I deduce four important systems. First, Upon the nature of the comedy of that age, without omitting that of *Menander* *. Secondly, Upon the vices and government of the *Athenians*. Thirdly, Upon the notion we ought to entertain of *Aristophanes*, with respect to *Eschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*. Fourthly, Upon the jest which he makes upon the gods. These things will not be treated in order, as a regular discourse seems to require, but will arise sometimes separately, sometimes together, from

* *Menander*, an *Athenian*, son of *Diopethes* and *Hegestrates*, was apparently the most eminent of the writers of the new comedy. He had been a scholar of *Theophrastus*: his passion for the women brought infamy upon him: he was squint-eyed, and very lively. Of the one hundred and eighty comedies, or, according to *Suidas*, the eighty which he composed, and which are all said to be translated by *Terence*, we have now only a few fragments remaining. He flourished about the 115th Olympiad, 318 years before the Christian Æra. He was drowned as he was bathing in the port of *Pireus*. I have told in another place, what is said of one *Philemon*, his antagonist, not so good a poet as himself, but one who often gained the prize. This *Philemon* was older than him, and was much

from the view of each particular comedy, and from the reflections which this free manner of writing will allow. I shall conclude with a short view of the whole, and so finish my design.

III. I shall not repeat here what Madame *Dacier*, and so many others before her, have collected of all that can be known relating to the history of comedy. Its beginnings are as obscure as those of tragedy, and there is an appearance that we take these two words in a more extensive meaning; they had both the same original, that is, they began among the festivals of the vintage, and were not distinguished from one another but by a burlesque or serious chorus, which made all the soul and all the body. But, if we give these words a stricter sense, according to the notion which has since been formed, comedy was produced after tragedy, and was in many respects a sequel and imitation of the works of *Eschylus*. It is in reality nothing more than an action set before the sight, by the same artifice of representation. Nothing is different but the object, which is merely ridicule. This original of true comedy will be easily admitted, if we take the

History of comedy.

much in fashion in the time of *Alexander the Great*. He expressed all his wishes in two lines, 'To have health, and fortune, and 'pleasure, and never to be in debt, is all I desire.' He was very covetous, and was pictured with his fingers hooked, so that he set his comedies at a high price. He lived about a hundred years, some say a hundred and one. Many tales are told of his death; *Valerius Maximus* says, that he died with laughing at a little incident: seeing an ass eating his figs, he ordered his servant to drive her away; the man made no great haste, and the ass eat them all. 'Well done, says *Philemon*, now give her some wine,' *Apuleius* and *Quintilian* placed this writer much below *Menander*, but give him the second place.

word of *Horace*, who muſt have known better than us the true dates of dramatick works. This poet ſupports the ſyſtem which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh in the ſecond diſcourſe * ſo ſtrongly as to amount to demonſtrative proof.

Horace † expreſſes himſelf thus, " *Theſpis* is ſaid to " have been the firſt inventor of a ſpecies of tragedy, " in which he carried about in carts, players ſmeared " with the dregs of wine, of whom ſome ſung and " others declaimed." This was the firſt attempt both of tragedy and comedy; for *Theſpis* made uſe only of one ſpeaker, without the leaſt appearance of dialogue. " *Eſchylus* afterwards exhibited them with more dig- " nity. He placed them on a ſtage, ſomewhat above " the ground, covered their faces with maſks, put " buſkins on their feet, dreſſed them in trailing robes, " and made them ſpeak in a more lofty ſtyle." *Horace* omits invention of dialogue, which we learn from *Ariſtotle* ‡. But, however, it may be well enough inferred from the following words of *Horace*; this completion is mentioned while he ſpeaks of *Eſchylus*, and therefore to *Eſchylus* it muſt be aſcribed: " Then " firſt appeared the old comedy, with great ſucceſs " in its beginning." Thus we ſee that the *Greek* comedy aroſe after tragedy, and by conſequence tragedy was its parent. It was formed in imitation of *Eſchylus*, the inventor of the tragick drama; or, to go yet higher into antiquity, had its original from *Homer*, who was the guide of *Eſchylus*. For, if we credit *Ariſtotle* §, comedy had its birth from the

* *Greek Theatre*, part I. vol. I. † *Hor.* Poet. v. 275.
‡ Poet. ch. 4. § Poet. ch. 4.

Margetes,

Margetes, a satirical poem of *Homer*, and tragedy from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Thus the design and artifice of comedy were drawn from *Homer* and *Eschylus*. This will appear less surprising, since the ideas of the human mind are always gradual, and arts are seldom invented but by imitation. The first idea contains the seed of the second; this second, expanding itself, gives birth to a third; and so on. Such is the progress of the mind of man; it proceeds in its productions step by step, in the same manner as nature multiplies her works by imitating, or repeating her own act, when she seems most to run into variety. In this manner it was that comedy had its birth, its increase, its improvement, its perfection, and its diversity.

Who is author of comedy.

IV. But the question is, who was the happy author of that imitation, and that shew, whether only one like *Eschylus* of tragedy, or whether they were several? for neither *Horace*, nor any before him, explained this *. This poet only quotes three writers

* 'The alterations, which have been made in tragedy, were 'perceptible, and the authors of them unknown; but comedy has 'lain in obscurity, being not cultivated, like tragedy, from the 'time of its original: for it was long before the magistrates began 'to give comick choruses. It was first exhibited by actors, who 'played voluntarily, without orders of the magistrates. From the 'time that it began to take some settled form, we know its au-'thors, but are not informed who first used masks, added prologues, 'increased the numbers of the actors, and joined all the other 'things which now belong to it. The first that thought of form-'ing comick fables, were *Epicharmus* and *Phormys*, and consequently 'this manner came from *Sicily*: *Crates* was the first *Athenian* that 'adopted it, and forsook the practice of gross raillery that prevail-'ed before.' *Aristot.* ch. 5. *Crates* flourished in the 82d Olympiad, 450 years before our Æra, twelve or thirteen years before *Aristophanes*.

who

who had reputation in the old Comedy, *Eupolis* *, *Cratinus* †, and *Ariſtophanes*, of whom he ſays, 'That 'they, and others who wrote in the ſame way, re-'prehended the faults of particular perſons with exceſ-'ſive liberty.' Theſe are probably the poets of the greateſt reputation, though they were not the firſt, and we know the names of many others ‡. Among theſe three we may be ſure that *Ariſtophanes* had the greateſt character, ſince not only the king of *Perſia* ‖ expreſſed a high eſteem of him to the *Grecian* ambaſſadors, as of a man extremely uſeful to his country, and *Plato* § rated him ſo high, as to ſay, that the graces reſided in his boſom; but likewiſe becauſe he is the only writer of whom any comedies have made their way down to us, through the confuſion of times. There are not indeed any proofs that he was the inventor of comedy, properly ſo called, eſpecially ſince he had not only predeceſſors who wrote in the ſame kind, but it is at leaſt a ſign, that he had contributed more than any other to bring comedy to

* *Eupolis* was an *Athenian*; his death, which we ſhall mention preſently, is repreſented differently by authors, who almoſt all agree that he was drowned. *Elian* adds an incident which deſerves to be mentioned: he ſays (book x. Of Animals), that one *Augeas* of *Eleuſis*, made *Eupolis* a preſent of a fine maſtif, who was ſo faithful to his maſter as to worry to death a ſlave who was carrying away ſome of his comedies. He adds, that when the poet died at *Egene*, his dog ſtaid by his tomb till he periſhed by grief and hunger.

† *Cratinus* of *Athens*, who was ſon of *Callimedes*, died at the age of ninety-ſeven. He compoſed twenty comedies, of which nine had the prize: he was a daring writer, but a cowardly warrior.

‡ *Hertelius* has collected the ſentences of fifty *Greek* poets of the different ages of comedy.

‖ Interlude of the ſecond act of the comedy intitled *The Acharniens*.

§ Epigram attributed to *Plato*.

the

the perfection in which he left it. We ſhall, therefore, not enquire farther, whether regular comedy was the work of a ſingle mind, which ſeems yet to be unſettled, or of ſeveral contemporaries, ſuch as theſe which *Horace* quotes. We muſt diſtinguiſh three forms which comedy wore, in conſequence of the genius of the writers, or of the laws of the magiſtrates, and the change of the government of many into that of few.

The old, middle, and new comedy.

That comedy *, which *Horace* calls the ancient, and which, according to his account, was after *Eſchylus*, retained ſomething of its original ſtate, and of the licentiouſneſs which it practiſed, while it was yet without regularity, and uttered looſe jokes and abuſe upon the paſſers-by from the cart of *Theſpis*. Though it was now properly modelled, as might have been worthy of a great theatre and a numerous audience, and deſerved the name of a regular comedy, it was not yet much nearer to decency. It was a repreſentation of real actions, and exhibited the dreſs, the motions, and the air, as far as could be done in a maſk, of any one who was thought proper to be ſacrificed to publick ſcorn. In a city ſo free, or to ſay better, ſo licentious as *Athens* was at that time, nobody was ſpared, not even the chief magiſtrate, nor the very judges, by whoſe voice comedies were allowed or prohibited. The inſolence of thoſe performances reached to open impiety, and ſport was made equally with men and

* This hiſtory of the three ages of comedy, and their different characters, is taken in part from the valuable fragments of *Platonius*.

gods.

gods *. These are the features by which the greatest part of the compositions of *Aristophanes* will be known. In which it may be particularly observed, that not the least appearance of praise will be found, and therefore certainly no trace of flattery or servility.

This licentiousness of the poets, to which in some sort *Socrates* fell a sacrifice, at last was restrained by a law. For the government, which was before shared by all the inhabitants, was now confined to a settled number of citizens. It was ordered, that no man's name should be mentioned on the stage; but poetical malignity was not long in finding the secret of defeating the purpose of the law, and of making themselves ample compensation for the restraint laid upon authors, by the necessity of inventing false names. They set themselves to work upon known and real characters, so that they had now the advantage of giving a more exquisite gratification to the vanity of poets, and the malice of spectators. One had the refined pleasure of setting others to guess, and the other that of guessing right by naming the masks. When pictures are so like, that the name is not wanted, nobody inscribes it. The consequence of the law, therefore, was nothing more than to make that done with delicacy, which was done grossly before; and the art, which was expected would be confined within the limits of duty, was only partly transgressed with more ingenuity. Of this *Aristophanes*, who was comprehended in this law, gives us good examples in some of his poems. Such was that which was afterwards called the middle comedy.

* It will be shewn how and in what sense this was allowed.

The

The new comedy, or that which followed, was again an excellent refinement, prefcribed by the magiftrates, who, as they had before forbid the ufe of real names, forbad afterwards real fubjects, and the train of choruses* too much given to abufe: fo that the poets faw themfelves reduced to the neceffity of bringing imaginary names and fubjects upon the ftage, which at once purified and enriched the theatre; for comedy from that time was no longer a fury armed with torches, but a pleafing and innocent mirror of human life.

Chacun peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir
S'y vit avec plaifir, ou crut ne s'y pas voir!
L'avare des premiers rit du tableau fidelle
D'un avare fouvent tracé fur fon modelle;
Et mille fois un fat finement exprimé
Méconnut le portrait fur lui-même formé †.

The comedy of *Menander* and *Terence* is, in propriety of fpeech, the fine comedy. I do not repeat all this after fo many writers but juft to recall it to memory, and to add to what they have faid, fomething which they have omitted, a fingular effect of publick edicts appearing in the fucceffive progrefs of the art. A naked hiftory of poets and of poetry, fuch as has been often given, is a mere body without foul, unlefs it be enlivened with an account of the birth, progrefs, and perfection of the art, and of the caufes by which they were produced.

* Perhaps the chorus was forbid in the middle age of the comedy. *Platonius* feems to fay fo.

† *Defpreaux Art. Poet. chant.* 3.

VI. To omit nothing essential which concerns this part, we shall say a word of the *Latin* comedy. When the arts passed from *Greece* to *Rome*, comedy took its turn among the rest: but the *Romans* applied themselves only to the new species, without chorus or personal abuse; though perhaps they might have played some translations of the old or the middle comedy, for *Pliny* gives an account of one which was represented in his own time. But the *Roman* comedy, which was modelled upon the last species of the *Greek*, hath nevertheless its different ages, according as its authors were rough or polished. The pieces of *Livius Andronicus* *, more ancient and less refined than those of the writers who learned the art from him, may be said to compose the first age, or the old *Roman* comedy and tragedy. To him you must join *Nevius* his contemporary, and *Ennius*, who lived some years after him. The second age comprises *Pacuvius*, *Cecilius*, *Accius*, and *Plautus*, unless it shall be thought better to reckon *Plautus* with *Terence*, to make the third and highest age of the *Latin* comedy, which may properly be called the new comedy, especially with regard to *Terence*, who was the friend of *Lelius*, and the faithful copier of *Menander*.

The *Latin* comedy.

But the *Romans*, without troubling themselves with this order of succession, distinguished their comedies by the dresses † of the players. The robe, called *prætexta*, with large borders of purple, being the formal dress of magistrates in their dignity, and in the

* The year of *Rome* 514, the first year of the 135th Olympiad.

† *Prætextæ*, *Togatæ*, *Tabernariæ*.

exercise

exercise of their office, the actors, who had this dress, gave its name to the comedy. This is the same with that called *Trabeata**, from *Trabea*, the dress of the consuls in peace, and the generals in triumph. The second species introduced the senators not in great offices, but as private men; this was called *Toges*, from *Togata*. The last species was named *Tabernaria*, from the tunick, or the common dress of the people, or rather from the mean houses which were painted on the scene. There is no need of mentioning the farces, which took their name and original from *Atella*, an ancient town of *Campania* in *Italy*, because they differed from the low comedy only by greater licentiousness; nor of those which were called *Palliates*, from the *Greek*, a cloak, in which the *Greek* characters were dressed upon the *Roman* stage, because that habit only distinguished the nation, not the dignity or character, like those which have been mentioned before. To say truth, these are but trifling distinctions; for, as we shall shew in the following pages, comedy may be more usefully and judiciously distinguished, by the general nature of its subjects. As to the *Romans*, whether they had, or had not, reason for these names, they have left us so little upon the subject which is come down to us, that we need not trouble ourselves with a distinction which affords us no solid satisfaction. *Plautus* and *Terence*, the only authors of whom we are in possession, give us a fuller notion of the real nature of their comedy, with respect at least to their own times, than

* *Suet. de Claris Grammat.* says, that *C. Gelissus*, librarian to *Augustus*, was the author of it.

can

can be received from names and terms, from which we have no real exemplification.

VII. Not to go too far out of our way, let us return to *Ariſtophanes*, the only poet in whom we can now find the *Greek* comedy. He is the ſingle writer, whom the violence of time has in ſome degree ſpared, after having buried in darkneſs, and almoſt in forgetfulneſs, ſo many great men, of whom we have nothing but the names and a few fragments, and ſuch ſlight memorials as are ſcarcely ſufficient to defend them againſt the enemies of the honour of antiquity; yet theſe memorials are like the laſt glimmer of the ſetting ſun, which ſcarce affords us a weak and fading light: yet from this glimmer we muſt endeavour to collect rays of ſufficient ſtrength to form a picture of the *Greek* comedy approaching as near as poſſible to the truth.

The *Greek* comedy is reduced only to *Ariſtophanes*.

Of the perſonal character of *Ariſtophanes* little is known; what account we can give of it muſt therefore be had from his comedies. It can ſcarcely be ſaid with certainty of what country he was: the invectives of his enemies ſo often called in queſtion his qualification as a citizen, that they have made it doubtful. Some ſaid, he was of *Rhodes*, others of *Egena*, a little iſland in the neighbourhood, and all agreed that he was a ſtranger. As to himſelf, he ſaid that he was the ſon of *Philip*, and born in the *Cydathenian* quarter; but he confeſſed that ſome of his fortune was in *Egena*, which was probably the original ſeat of his family. He was, however, formally declared a citizen of *Athens*, upon evidence, whether good or bad, upon a deciſive judgment, and this for having

having made his judges merry by an application of a ſaying of *Telemachus* *, of which this is the ſenſe: "I am, as my mother tells me, the ſon of *Philip*; "for my own part, I know little of the matter, for "what child knows his own father?" This piece of merriment did him as much good, as *Archias* received from the oration of *Cicero* †, who ſaid that that poet was a *Roman* citizen. An honour which, if he had not inherited by birth, he deſerved for his genius.

Ariſtophanes ‡ flouriſhed in the age of the great men of *Greece*, particularly of *Socrates* and *Euripides*, both of whom he outlived. He made a great figure during the whole *Peloponneſian* war, not merely as a comick poet by whom the people were diverted, but as the cenſor of the government, as a man kept in pay by the ſtate to reform it, and almoſt to act the part of the arbitrator of the publick. A particular account of his comedies will beſt let us into his perſonal character as a poet, and into the nature of his genius, which is what we are moſt intereſted to know. It will, however, not be amiſs to prepoſſeſs our readers a little by the judgments that had been paſſed upon him by the criticks of our own time, without forgetting one of the ancients that deſerves great reſpect.

Ariſtophanes cenſured and praiſed.

VIII. "*Ariſtophanes*," ſays father *Rapin*, "is not exact in the contrivance "of his fables; his fictions are not "probable; he brings real characters upon the ſtage "too coarſely and too openly. *Socrates*, whom he

* *Homer, Odyſſey.* † *Orat. pro Archia Poeta.*

‡ In the 85th year of the Olympiad, 437 before our Æra, and 317 of the foundation of *Rome*.

"ridicules ſo much in his plays, had a more delicate "turn of burleſque than himſelf, and had his merri-"ment without his impudence. It is true, that *Ariſ-"tophanes* wrote amidſt the confuſion and licentiouſ-"neſs of the old comedy, and he was well acquainted "with the humour of the *Athenians*, to whom un-"common merit always gave diſguſt, and therefore "he made the eminent men of his time the ſubject "of his merriment. But the too great deſire which "he had to delight the people by expoſing worthy "characters upon the ſtage, made him at the ſame "time an unworthy man; and the turn of his genius "to ridicule was disfigured and corrupted by the in-"delicacy and outrageouſneſs of his manners. After "all, his pleaſantry conſiſts chiefly in new-coined "puffy language. The diſh of twenty-ſix ſyllables, "which he gives in his laſt ſcene of his *Female Ora-"tors*, would pleaſe few taſtes in our days. His lan-"guage is ſometimes obſcure, perplexed and vulgar, "and his frequent play with words, his oppoſitions "of contradictory terms, his mixture of tragick and "comick, of ſerious and burleſque, are all flat; and "his jocularity, if you examine it to the bottom, is "all falſe. *Menander* is diverting in a more elegant "manner; his ſtyle is pure, clear, elevated, and na-"tural; he perſuades like an orator, and inſtructs "like a philoſopher; and if we may venture to "judge upon the fragments which remain, it appears "that his pictures of civil life are pleaſing, that he "makes every one ſpeak according to his character, "that every man may apply his pictures of life to "himſelf, becauſe he always follows nature, and feels "for the perſonages which he brings upon the ſtage.

"To conclude, *Plutarch*, in his comparison of these "authors, says, that the Muse of *Aristophanes* is an "abandoned prostitute, and that of *Menander* a modest "woman."

It is evident that this whole character is taken from *Plutarch*. Let us now go on with this remark of father *Rapin*, since we have already spoken of the *Latin* comedy, of which he gives us a description.

"With respect to the two *Latin* comick poets, *Plau-* "*tus* is ingenious in his designs, happy in his concep- "tions, and fruitful of invention. He has, however, "according to *Horace*, some low jocularities, and "those smart sayings, which made the vulgar laugh, "made him be pitied by men of higher taste. It is "true, that some of his jests are extremely good, but "others likewise are very bad. To this every man "is exposed, who is too much determined to make "sallies of merriment; they endeavour to raise that "laughter by hyperboles, which would not arise by "a just representation of things. *Plautus* is not quite "so regular as *Terence* in the scheme of his designs, "or in the distribution of his acts, but he is more "simple in his plot; for the fables of *Terence* are "commonly complex, as may be seen in his *Andrea*, "which contains two amours. It was imputed as a "fault to *Terence*, that, to bring more action upon "the stage, he made one *Latin* comedy out of two "*Greek*; but then *Terence* unravels his plot more na- "turally than *Plautus*, which *Plautus* did more na- "turally than *Aristophanes*; and though *Cæsar* calls "*Terence* but one half of *Menander*, because, though "he had softness and delicacy, there was in him "some want of sprightliness and strength; yet he has

 "written

"written in a manner ſo natural and ſo judicious, "that, though he was then only a copy, he is now "an original. No author has ever had a more exact "ſenſe of pure nature. Of *Cecilius*, ſince we have "only a few fragments, I ſhall ſay nothing. All "that we know of him is told us by *Varrus*, that he "was happy in the choice of ſubjects."

Rapin omits many others for the ſame reaſon, that we have not enough of their works to qualify us for judges. While we are upon this ſubject, it will perhaps not diſpleaſe the reader to ſee what that critick's opinion is of *Lopes de Vega* and *Moliere*. It will appear, that, with reſpect to *Lopes de Vega*, he is rather too profuſe of praiſe: that in ſpeaking of *Moliere*, he is too parſimonious. This piece will, however, be of uſe to our deſign, when we ſhall examine to the bottom what it is that ought to make the character of comedy.

"No man has ever had a greater genius for comedy "than *Lopes de Vega* the *Spaniard*. He had a fertility "of wit, joined with great beauty of conception, and "a wonderful readineſs of compoſition; for he has "written more than three hundred comedies. His "name alone gave reputation to his pieces; for his re- "putation was ſo well eſtabliſhed, that a work, which "came from his hands, was ſure to claim the ap- "probation of the public. He had a mind too ex- "tenſive to be ſubjected to rules, or reſtrained by "limits. For that reaſon he gave himſelf up to his "own genius, on which he could always depend "with confidence. When he wrote, he conſulted no "other laws than the taſte of his auditors, and regu- "lated his manner more by the ſucceſs of his work

"than

"than by the rules of reaſon. Thus he diſcarded all "ſcruples of unity, and all the ſuperſtitions of proba-"bility." (This is certainly not ſaid with a deſign to praiſe him, and muſt be connected with that which immediately follows.) "But as for the moſt part, "he endeavours at too much jocularity, and carries "ridicule to too much refinement; his conceptions "are often rather happy than juſt, and rather wild "than natural; for, by ſubtilizing merriment too far, "it becomes too nice to be true, and his beauties loſe "their power of ſtriking by being too delicate and "acute.

"Among us, nobody has carried ridicule in co-"medy farther than *Moliere*. Our ancient comick "writers brought no characters higher than ſervants, "to make ſport upon the theatre; but we are di-"verted upon the theatre of *Moliere* by marquiſes "and people of quality. Others have exhibited in "comedy no ſpecies of life above that of a citizen; "but *Moliere* ſhews us all *Paris*, and the court. He "is the only man amongſt us, who has laid open "thoſe features of nature by which he is exactly "marked, and may be accurately known. The "beauties of his pictures are ſo natural, that they "are felt by perſons of the leaſt diſcernment, and his "power of pleaſantry received half its force from his "power of copying. His Miſanthrope is, in my opi-"nion, the moſt complete, and likewiſe the moſt "ſingular character that has ever appeared upon the "ſtage: but the diſpoſition of his comedies is always "defective ſome way or another. This is all which "we can obſerve in general upon comedy."

Such are the thoughts of one of the moſt refined judges of works of genius, from which, though they are not all oraculous, ſome advantages may be drawn, as they always make ſome approaches to truth.

Madame *Dacier* *, having her mind full of the merit of *Ariſtophanes*, expreſſes herſelf in this manner: "No man had ever more diſcernment than him, in "finding out the ridiculous, nor a more ingenious "manner of ſhewing it to others. His remarks are "natural and eaſy, and, what very rarely can be "found, with great copiouſneſs he has great delicacy. "To ſay all at once, the *Attick* wit, of which the an-"cients made ſuch boaſt, appears more in *Ariſto-*"*phanes* than in any other that I know of in anti-"quity. But what is moſt of all to be admired in "him is, that he is always ſo much maſter of the "ſubject before him, that, without doing any vio-"lence to himſelf, he finds a way to introduce natu-"rally things which at firſt appeared moſt diſtant "from his purpoſe; and even the moſt quick and "unexpected of his deſultory ſallies appear the ne-"ceſſary conſequence of the foregoing incidents. This "is that art which ſets the dialogues of *Plato* above "imitation, which we muſt conſider as ſo many dra-"matick pieces, which are equally entertaining by the "action and by the dialogue. The ſtyle of *Ariſto-*"*phanes* is no leſs pleaſing than his fancy; for, be-"ſides its clearneſs, its vigour, and its ſweetneſs, "there is in it a certain harmony ſo delightful to "the ear, that there is no pleaſure equal to that of "reading it. When he applies himſelf to vulgar

* Preface to *Plautus*. *Paris*, 1684.

"mediocrity

" mediocrity of ſtyle, he deſcends without meanneſs; " when he attempts the ſublime, he is elevated with- " out obſcurity; and no man has ever had the art of " blending all the different kinds of writing ſo equally " together. After having ſtudied all that is left us " of *Grecian* learning, if we have not read *Ariſtophanes*, " we cannot yet know all the charms and beauties of " that language."

Plutarch's ſentiment upon *Ariſtophanes* and *Menander*.

IX. This is a pompous elogium: but let us ſuſpend our opinion, and hear that of *Plutarch*, who, being an ancient, well deſerves our attention, at leaſt after we have heard the moderns before him. This is then the ſum of his judgment concerning *Ariſtophanes* and *Menander*. To *Menander* he gives the preference, without allowing much competition. He objects to *Ariſtophanes*, that he carries all his thoughts beyond nature, that he writes rather to the crowd than to men of character; that he affects a ſtyle obſcure and licentious; tragical, pompous, and mean, ſometimes ſerious, and ſometimes ludicrous, even to puerility; that he makes none of his perſonages ſpeak according to any diſtinct character, ſo that in his ſcenes the ſon cannot be known from the father, the citizen from the boor, the hero from the ſhopkeeper, or the divine from the ſerving-man. Whereas the diction of *Menander*, which is always uniform and pure, is very juſtly adapted to different characters, riſing when it is neceſſary to vigorous and ſprightly comedy, yet without tranſgreſſing the proper limits, or loſing ſight of nature, in which *Menander*, ſays *Plutarch*, has attained a perfection to which no other writer has arrived. For, what man, beſides himſelf, has ever found the art of making a diction equally ſuitable to women and chil-

 dren,

dren, to old and young, to divinities and heroes? Now *Menander* has found this happy ſecret, in the equality and flexibility of his diction, which, though always the ſame, is nevertheleſs different upon different occaſions; like a current of clear water (to keep cloſely to the thoughts of *Plutarch*), which running through banks differently turned, complies with all their turns backward and forward, without changing any thing of its nature or its purity. *Plutarch* mentions it as a part of the merit of *Menander*, that he began very young, and was ſtopped only by old age, at a time when he would have produced the greateſt wonders, if death had not prevented him. This, joined to a reflection, which he makes as he returns to *Ariſtophanes*, ſhews that *Ariſtophanes* continued a long time to diſplay his powers: for his poetry, ſays *Plutarch*, is a ſtrumpet that affects ſometimes the airs of a prude, but whoſe impudence cannot be forgiven by the people, and whoſe affected modeſty is deſpiſed by men of decency. *Menander*, on the contrary, always ſhews himſelf a man agreeable and witty, a companion deſirable upon the ſtage, at table, and in gay aſſemblies; an extract of all the treaſures of *Greece*, who deſerves always to be read, and always to pleaſe. His irreſiſtible power of perſuaſion, and the reputation which he has had, of being the beſt maſter of language of *Greece*, ſufficiently ſhews the delightfulneſs of his ſtyle. Upon this article of *Menander*, *Plutarch* does not know how to make an end: he ſays, that he is the delight of philoſophers fatigued with ſtudy; that they uſe his works as a meadow enamelled with flowers, where a purer air gratifies the ſenſe; that, notwithſtanding the powers of the other comick poets of *Athens*, *Menander* has always been conſidered as poſſeſſing a ſalt peculiar to himſelf,

drawn

drawn from the ſame waters that gave birth to *Venus*. That, on the contrary, the ſalt of *Ariſtophanes* is bitter, keen, coarſe, and corroſive; that one cannot tell whether his dexterity, which has been ſo much boaſted, conſiſts not more in the characters than in the expreſſion, for he is charged with playing often upon words, with affecting antithetical alluſions; that he has ſpoiled the copies which he endeavoured to take after nature; that artifice in his plays is wickedneſs, and ſimplicity, brutiſhneſs; that his jocularity ought to raiſe hiſſes rather than laughter; that his amours have more impudence than gaiety; and that he has not ſo much written for men of underſtanding, as for minds blackened with envy and corrupted with debauchery.

The juſtification of *Ariſtophanes*.

X. After ſuch a character there ſeems no need of going further; and one would think, that it would be better to bury for ever the memory of ſo hateful a writer, that makes us ſo poor a recompenſe for the loſs of *Menander*, who cannot be recalled. But, without ſhewing any mercy to the indecent or malicious ſallies of *Ariſtophanes*, any more than to *Plautus* his imitator, or at leaſt the inheritor of his genius, may it not be allowed us to do, with reſpect to him, what, if I miſtake not, *Lucretius* * did to *Ennius*, from whoſe muddy verſes he gathered jewels? *Enni de ſtercore gemmas*.

Beſides, we muſt not believe that *Plutarch*, who lived more than four ages after *Menander*, and more than five after *Ariſtophanes*, has paſſed ſo exact a judgment upon both, but that it may be fit to re-examine it. *Plato*, the contemporary of *Ariſtophanes*, thought very diffe-

* *Brumoy* has miſtaken *Lucretius* for *Virgil*.

rently,

rently, at leaſt of his genius; for, in his piece called *The Entertainment*, he gives that poet a diſtinguiſhed place, and makes him ſpeak, according to his character, with *Socrates* himſelf; from which, by the way, it is apparent, that this dialogue of *Plato* was compoſed before the time that *Ariſtophanes* wrote his *Clouds* againſt *Socrates*. *Plato* is likewiſe ſaid to have ſent a copy of *Ariſtophanes* to *Dionyſius* the tyrant, with advice to read it diligently, if he would attain a complete judgment of the ſtate of the *Athenian* republic.

Many other ſcholars have thought, that they might depart ſomewhat from the opinion of *Plutarch*. *Friſchlinus*, for example, one of the commentators upon *Ariſtophanes*, though he juſtly allows his taſte to be leſs pure than that of *Menander*, has yet undertaken his defence againſt the outrageous cenſure of the ancient critick. In the firſt place, he condemns without mercy his ribaldry and obſcenity. But this part, ſo worthy of contempt, and written only for the lower people, according to the remark of *Boivin*, bad as it is, after all is not the chief part which is left of *Ariſtophanes*. I will not ſay with *Friſchlinus*, that *Plutarch* ſeems in this to contradict himſelf, and in reality commends the poet, when he accuſes him of having adapted his language to the ſtage; by the ſtage, in this place, he meant the theatre of *Farces*, on which low mirth and buffoonry was exhibited. This plea of *Friſchlinus* is a mere cavil; and though the poet had obtained his end, which was to divert a corrupted populace, he would not have been leſs a bad man, nor leſs a deſpicable poet, notwithſtanding the excuſe of his defender. To be able in the higheſt degree to divert fools and libertines, will not make a poet: it is not,

therefore,

therefore, by this defence that we muſt juſtify the character of *Ariſtophanes*. The depraved taſte of the crowd, who once drove away *Cratinus* and his company, becauſe the ſcenes had not low buffoonry enough for their taſte, will not juſtify *Ariſtophanes*, ſince *Menander* found a way of changing the taſte by giving a ſort of comedy, not indeed ſo modeſt as *Plutarch* repreſents it, but leſs licentious than before. Nor is *Ariſtophanes* better juſtified by the reaſon which he himſelf offers, when he ſays, that he exhibited debauchery upon the ſtage, not to corrupt the morals, but to mend them. The ſight of groſs faults is rather a poiſon than a remedy.

The apologiſt has forgot one reaſon, which appears to me eſſential to a juſt account. As far as we can judge by appearance, *Plutarch* had in his hands all the plays of *Ariſtophanes*, which were at leaſt fifty in number. In theſe he ſaw more licentiouſneſs than has come to our hands, though in the eleven that are ſtill remaining, there is much more than could be wiſhed.

Plutarch cenſures him in the ſecond place for playing upon words; and againſt this charge *Friſchlinus* defends him with leſs ſkill. It is impoſſible to exemplify this in *French*. But after all, this part is ſo little, that it deſerved not ſo ſevere a reprehenſion, eſpecially ſince amongſt thoſe ſayings, there are ſome ſo miſchievouſly malignant, that they became proverbial, at leaſt by the ſting of their malice, if not by the delicacy of their wit. One example will be ſufficient: ſpeaking of the tax-gatherers, or the exciſemen of *Athens*, he cruſhes them at once by obſerving, *non quod eſſent* ταμιαὶ *ſed* λαμιαὶ. The word *lamiæ* ſignified

fied *walking ſpirits*, which, according to the vulgar notion, devoured men; this makes the ſpirit of the ſarcaſm againſt the tax-gatherers. This cannot be rendered in our language; but if any thing as good had been ſaid in *France* on the like occaſion, it would have laſted too long, and, like many other ſayings amongſt us, been too well received. The beſt is, that *Plutarch* himſelf confeſſes that it was extremely applauded.

The third charge is, a mixture of tragick and comick ſtyle. This accuſation is certainly true; *Ariſtophanes* often gets into the buſkin: but we muſt examine upon what occaſion. He does not take upon him the character of a tragick writer; but, having remarked that his trick of parody was always well received by a people who liked to laugh at that for which they had been juſt weeping, he is eternally uſing the ſame craft; and there is ſcarce any tragedy or ſtriking paſſage known by memory by the *Athenians*, which he does not turn into merriment, by throwing over it a dreſs of ridicule and burleſque, which is done ſometimes by changing or tranſpoſing the words, and ſometimes by an unexpected application of the whole ſentence. Theſe are the ſhreds of tragedy, in which he arrays the comick muſe, to make her ſtill more comick. *Cratinus* had before done the ſame thing; and we know that he made a comedy called *Ulyſſes*, to burleſque *Homer* and his *Odyſſey*; which ſhews, that the wits and poets are, with reſpect to one another, much the ſame at all times, and that it was at *Athens* as here. I will prove this ſyſtem by facts, particularly with reſpect to the merriment of *Ariſtophanes* upon our three celebrated tragedians. This being the caſe, the mingled ſtyle of *Ariſtophanes* will, perhaps, not

deſerve

deserve so much censure as *Plutarch* has vented. We have no need of the Travesty of *Virgil*, nor the parodies of our own time, nor of the Lutrin of *Boileau*, to shew us that this medley may have its merit upon particular occasions.

The same may be said in general of his obscurity, his meannesses, and his high flights, and of all the seeming inequality of style, which puts *Plutarch* in a rage. These censures can never be just upon a poet, whose style has always been allowed to be perfectly *Attick*, and of an *Atticism* which made him extremely delightful to the lovers of the *Athenian* taste. *Plutarch*, perhaps, rather means to blame the choruses, of which the language is sometimes elevated, sometimes burlesque, always very poetical, and therefore in appearance not suitable to comedy. But the chorus, which had been borrowed from tragedy, was then all the fashion, particularly for pieces of satire, and *Aristophanes* admitted them like the other poets of the old, and perhaps of the middle comedy; whereas *Menander* suppressed them, not so much in compliance with his own judgment, as in obedience to the publick edicts. It is not, therefore, this mixture of tragick and comick that will place *Aristophanes* below *Menander*.

The fifth charge is, that he kept no distinction of character; that, for example, he makes women speak like orators, and orators like slaves: but it appears by the characters which he ridicules, that this objection falls of itself. It is sufficient to say, that a poet who painted, not imaginary characters, but real persons, men well known, citizens whom he called by their names, and shewed in dresses like their own, and masks resembling their faces, whom he branded in the sight of a whole

city,

city, extremely haughty and full of derision; it is sufficient to say, that such a poet could never be supposed to miss his characters. The applause, which his licentiousness produced, is too good a justification; besides, if he had not succeeded, he exposed himself to the fate of *Eupolis*, who, in a comedy called the *Drowned Man*, having imprudently pulled to pieces particular persons, more powerful than himself, was laid hold of, and drowned more effectually than those he had drowned upon the open stage.

The condemnation of the poignancy of *Aristophanes*, as having too much acrimony, is better founded. Such was the turn of a species of comedy, in which all licentiousness was allowed; in a nation which made every thing a subject of laughter, in its jealousy of immoderate liberty, and its enmity to all appearance of rule and superiority; for the genius of independency naturally produces a kind of satire more keen than delicate, as may be easily observed in most of the inhabitants of islands. If we do not say with *Longinus*, that a popular government kindles eloquence, and that a lawful monarchy stifles it; at least it is easy to discover by the event, that eloquence in different governments takes a different appearance. In republicks it is more sprightly and violent, and in monarchies more insinuating and soft. The same thing may be said of ridicule: it follows the cast of genius, as genius follows that of government. Thus the republican raillery, particularly of the age which we are now considering, must have been rougher than that of the age which followed it, for the same reason, that *Horace* is more delicate, and *Lucilius* more pointed. A dish of satire was always a delicious treat to human malignity; but that dish was differently seasoned, as the manners

manners were poliſhed more or leſs. By poliſhed manners I mean that good-breeding, that art of reſerve and ſelf-reſtraint, which is the conſequence of dependence. If one was to determine the preference due to one of thoſe kinds of pleaſantry, of which both have their value, there would not need a moment's heſitation, every voice would join in favour of the ſofter, yet without contempt of that which is rough. *Menander* will, therefore, be preferred, but *Ariſtophanes* will not be deſpiſed, eſpecially ſince he was the firſt who quitted that wild practice of ſatiriſing at liberty right or wrong, and by a comedy of another caſt made way for the manner of *Menander*, more agreeable yet, and leſs dangerous. There is yet another diſtinction to be made between the acrimony of the one, and the ſoftneſs of the other; the works of the one are acrimonious, and of the other ſoft, becauſe the one exhibited perſonal, and the other general characters; which leaves us ſtill at liberty to examine, if theſe different deſigns might not be executed with equal delicacy.

We ſhall know this by a view of the particulars; in this place we ſay only that the reigning taſte, or the love of ſtriking likeneſſes, might juſtify *Ariſtophanes* for having turned, as *Plutarch* ſays, art into malignity, ſimplicity into brutality, merriment into farce, and amour into impudence; if in any age a poet could be excuſed for painting publick folly and vice in their true colours.

There is a motive of intereſt at the bottom which diſpoſed *Elian*, *Plutarch*, and many others, to condemn this poet without appeal. *Socrates*, who is ſaid to have been deſtroyed by a poetical attack, at the inſtigation of

two

two wretches *, has too many friends among good men, to have pardon granted to ſo horrid a crime. This has filled them with an implacable hatred againſt *Ariſtophanes*, which is mingled with the ſpirit of philoſophy, a ſpirit, wherever it comes, more dangerous than any other. A common enemy will confeſs ſome good qualities in his adverſary; but a philoſopher, made partial by philoſophy, is never at reſt till he has totally deſtroyed him who has hurt the moſt tender part of his heart; that is, has diſturbed him in his adherence to ſome character, which, like that of *Socrates*, takes poſſeſſion of the mind. The mind is the freeſt part of man, and the moſt tender of its liberties: poſſeſſions, life, and reputation, may be in another's power, but opinion is always independent. If any man can obtain that gentle influence, by which he ingratiates himſelf with the underſtanding, and makes a ſect in a commonwealth, his followers will ſacrifice themſelves for him, and nobody will be pardoned that dares to attack him juſtly or unjuſtly, becauſe that truth, real or imaginary, which he maintained, is now become an idol. Time will do nothing for the extinction of this hatred; it will be propagated from age to age; and there is no hope that *Ariſtophanes* will ever be treated with tenderneſs by the diſciples of *Plato*, who made *Socrates* his hero. Every body elſe may, perhaps, confeſs, that *Ariſtophanes*, though in one inſtance a bad man, may nevertheleſs be a good poet; but diſtinctions, like theſe, will not

* It is not certain, that *Ariſtophanes* did procure the death of *Socrates*: but, however, he is certainly criminal for having, in the *Clouds*, accuſed him publickly of impiety.

be

be admitted by prejudice and paſſion, and one or other dictates all characters, whether good or bad.

As I add my own reaſons, ſuch as they are, for or againſt *Ariſtophanes*, to thoſe of *Friſchlinus* his defender, I muſt not omit one thing which he has forgot, and which, perhaps, without taking in the reſt, put *Plutarch* out of humour, which is that perpetual farce which goes through all the comedies of *Ariſtophanes*, like the character of *Harlequin* on the *Italian* theatre. What kind of perſonages are clouds, frogs, waſps, and birds? *Plutarch*, uſed to a comick ſtage of a very different appearance, muſt have thought them ſtrange things; and yet ſtranger muſt they appear to us, who have a newer kind of comedy, with which the *Greeks* were unacquainted. This is what our poet may be charged with, and what may be proved beyond refutation. This charge compriſes all the reſt, and againſt this I ſhall not pretend to juſtify him. It would be of no uſe to ſay, that *Ariſtophanes* wrote for an age that required ſhews which filled the eye, and groteſque paintings in ſatirical performances; that the crowds of ſpectators, which ſometimes neglected *Cratinus* to throng *Ariſtophanes*, obliged him more and more to comply with the ruling taſte, leſt he ſhould loſe the publick favour by pictures more delicate and leſs ſtriking; that in a ſtate, where it was conſidered as policy to lay open every thing that had the appearance of ambition, ſingularity, or knavery, comedy was become a haranguer, a reformer, and a publick counſellor, from whom the people learned to take care of their moſt valuable intereſts; and that this comedy, in the attempt to lead and to pleaſe the people, claimed a right to the ſtrongeſt touches of eloquence, and had likewiſe the power of perſonal

 painting

painting peculiar to herſelf. All theſe reaſons, and many others, would diſappear immediately, and my mouth would be ſtopped with a ſingle word, with which every body would agree: my antagoniſt would tell me, that ſuch an age was to be pitied, and paſſing on from age to age, till he came to our own, he would conclude flatly, that we are the only poſſeſſors of common ſenſe; a determination with which the *French* are too much reproached, and which overthrows all the prejudice in favour of antiquity. At the ſight of ſo many happy touches, which one cannot help admiring in *Ariſtophanes*, a man might, perhaps, be inclined to lament that ſuch a genius was thrown into an age of fools: but what age has been without them? And have not we ourſelves reaſon to fear, leſt poſterity ſhould judge of *Moliere* and his age, as we judge of *Ariſtophanes*? *Menander* altered the taſte, and was applauded in *Athens*; but it was after *Athens* was changed. *Terence* imitated him at *Rome*, and obtained the preference over *Plautus*, though *Cæſar* called him but a demi-*Menander*, becauſe he appears to want that ſpirit and vivacity which he calls the *vis comica*. We are now weary of the manner of *Menander* and *Terence*, and leave them for *Moliere*, who appears like a new ſtar in a new courſe. Who can anſwer, that in ſuch an interval of time as has paſt between theſe four writers, there will not ariſe another author, or another taſte, that may bring *Moliere*, in his turn, into neglect? Without going further, our neighbours, the *Engliſh*, think he wants force and fire. Whether they are right, or no, is another queſtion; all that I mean to advance is, that we are to fix it as a concluſion, that comick authors muſt grow obſolete with the modes of life, if we admit any one age, or any one climate,

mate, for the ſovereign rule of taſte. But let us talk with more exactneſs, and endeavour by an exact analyſis to find out what there is in comedy, whether of *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus*, of *Menander* and *Terence*, of *Moliere* and his rivals, which is never obſolete, and muſt pleaſe all ages and all nations.

Remarkable difference between the ſtate of comedy, and other works of genius, with regard to their duration.

XI. I now ſpeak particularly of comedy; for we muſt obſerve, that between that and other works of literature, eſpecially tragedy, there is an eſſential difference, which the enemies of antiquity will not underſtand, and which I ſhall endeavour palpably to ſhew.

All works ſhew the age in which they are produced; they carry its ſtamp upon them; the manners of the times are impreſſed by indelible marks. If it be allowed, that the beſt of paſt times were rude in compariſon with ours, the cauſe of the ancients is decided againſt them; and the want of politeneſs, with which their works are charged in our days, muſt be generally confeſſed. Hiſtory alone ſeems to claim exemption from this accuſation. Nobody will dare to ſay of *Herodotus* or *Thucydides*, of *Livius* or *Tacitus*, that which has been ſaid without ſcruple of *Homer* and the ancient poets. The reaſon is, that hiſtory takes the neareſt way to its purpoſe, and gives the characters and practices of nations, be they what they will; it has no dependance upon its ſubject, and offers nothing to examination, but the art of the narrative. An hiſtory of *China* well written, would pleaſe a *Frenchman* as well as one of *France*. It is otherwiſe with mere works of genius, they depend upon their ſubjects, and conſequently upon the characters and

the practices of the times in which they were written; this at least is the light in which they are beheld. This rule of judgment is not equitable; for, as I have said over and over, all the orators and the poets are painters, and merely painters. They exhibit nature as it is before them, influenced by the accidents of education, which, without changing it intirely, yet give it, in different ages and climates, a different appearance; but we make their succefs depend in a great degree upon their subject, that is, upon circumstances which we measure by the circumstances of our own days. According to this prejudice, oratory depends more upon its subject than history, and poetry yet more than oratory. Our times, therefore, shew more regard to *Herodotus* and *Suetonius*, than to *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, and more to all these than to *Homer* or *Virgil*. Of this prejudice, there are regular gradations; and to come back to the point which we have left, we shew, for the same imperceptible reason, less regard to tragick poets than to others. The reason is, that the subjects of their paintings are more examined than the art. Thus comparing the *Achilles* and *Hippolytus* of *Euripides*, with those of *Racine*, we drive them off the stage, without considering that *Racine*'s heroes will be driven off, in a future age, if the same rule of judgment be followed, and one time be measured by another.

Yet tragedy having the passions for its object, is not wholly exposed to the caprice of our taste, which would make our own manners the rule of human kind; for the passions of *Grecian* heroes are often dressed in external modes of appearance that disgust us, yet they break through the veil when they are strongly marked, as we cannot deny them to be in *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*.

pides. The essence then gets the better of the circumstance. The passions of *Greece* and *France* do not so much differ by the particular characters of particular ages, as they agree by the participation of that which belongs to the same passion in all ages. Our three tragick poets will, therefore, get clear by suffering only a little ridicule, which falls directly upon their times; but these times and themselves will be well recompensed by the admiration which their art will irresistibly inforce.

Comedy is in a more lamentable situation; for, not only its object is the ridiculous, which, though in reality always the same, is so dependant on custom as to change its appearance with time, and with place; but the art of a comick writer is, to lay hold of that species of the ridiculous which will catch the spectators of the present hour, without regard to futurity. But, though comedy has attained its end, and diverted the pit, for which it was written; if it goes down to posterity, it is in a new world, where it is no longer known; it becomes there quite a foreigner, because there are no longer the same originals, nor the same species of the ridiculous, nor the same spectators, but a set of merciless readers, who complain that they are tired with it, though it once filled *Athens*, *Rome*, or *Paris*, with merriment. This position is general, and comprises all poets and all ages. To say all at once, comedy is the slave of its subject, and of the reigning taste; tragedy is not subject to the same degree of slavery, because the ends of the two species of poetry are different. For this reason, if we suppose that in all ages there are criticks who measure every thing by the same rule, it will follow, that if the comedy of *Aristophanes* be become obsolete, that of *Menander* like-

wiſe, after having delighted *Athens*, and revived again at *Rome*, at laſt ſuffered by the force of time. The Muſe of *Moliere* has almoſt made both of them forgotten, and would ſtill be walking the ſtage, if the deſire of novelty did not in time make us weary of that which we have too frequently admired.

Thoſe who have endeavoured to render their judgment independant upon manners and cuſtoms, and of ſuch men there have been always ſome, have not judged ſo ſeverely either of times, or of writers; they have diſcovered that a certain reſemblance runs through all poliſhed ages, which are alike in eſſential things, and differ only in external manners, which, if we except religion, are things of indifference; that wherever there is genius, politeneſs, liberty, or plenty, there prevails an exact and delicate taſte, which, however hard to be expreſſed, is felt by thoſe that were born to feel it; that *Athens*, the inventreſs of all the arts, the mother firſt of the *Roman* and then of general taſte, did not conſiſt of ſtupid ſavages; that the *Athenian* and *Auguſtan* ages having always been conſidered as times that enjoyed a particular privilege of excellence, though we may diſtinguiſh the good authors from the bad, as in our own days, yet we ought to ſuſpend the vehemence of criticiſm, and proceed with caution and timidity before we paſs ſentence upon times and writers, whoſe good taſte has been univerſally applauded. This obvious conſideration has diſpoſed them to pauſe; they have endeavoured to diſcover the original of taſte, and have found that there is not only a ſtable and immutable beauty, as there is a common underſtanding in all times and places, which is never obſolete; but there is another kind of beauty, ſuch as we are now treating, which depends upon times and

and places, and is therefore changeable. Such is the imperfection of every thing below, that one mode of beauty is never found without a mixture of the other, and from these two blended together results what is called the taste of an age. I am now speaking of an age sprightly and polite, an age which leaves works for a long time behind it, an age which is imitated or criticised when revolutions have thrown it out of sight.

Upon this incontestable principle, which supposes a beauty universal and absolute, and a beauty likewise relative and particular, which are mingled through one work in very different proportions, it is easy to give an account of the contrary judgments passed on *Aristophanes*. If we consider him only with respect to the beauties, which, though they do not please us, delighted the *Athenians*, we shall condemn him at once, though even this sort of beauty may sometimes have its original in universal beauty carried to extravagance. Instead of commending him for being able to give merriment to the most refined nation of those days, we shall proceed to place that people, with all their atticism, in the rank of savages whom we take upon us to degrade because they have no other qualifications but innocence and plain understanding. But have not we likewise amidst our more polished manners, beauties merely fashionable, which make part of our writings as of the writings of former times; beauties of which our self-love now makes us fond, but which, perhaps, will disgust our grand-sons? Let us be more equitable, let us leave this relative beauty to its real value more or less in every age: or, if we must pass judgment upon it, let us say that these touches

in *Ariſtophanes*, *Menander*, and *Moliere*, were well ſtruck off in their own time; but, that comparing them with true beauty, that part of *Ariſtophanes* was a colouring too ſtrong, that of *Menander* was too weak, and that of *Moliere* was a peculiar varniſh formed of one and the other, which, without being an imitation, is itſelf inimitable, yet depending upon time, which will efface it by degrees, as our notions, which are every day changing, ſhall receive a ſenſible alteration. Much of this has already happened ſince the time of *Moliere*, who, if he was now to come again, muſt take a new road.

With reſpect to unalterable beauties, of which comedy admits much fewer than tragedy, when they are the ſubject of our conſideration, we muſt not too eaſily ſet *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus* below *Menander* and *Terence*. We may properly heſitate with *Boileau*, whether we ſhall prefer the *French* comedy to the *Greek* and *Latin*. Let us only give, like him, the great rule for pleaſing in all ages, and the key by which all the difficulties in paſſing judgment may be opened. This rule and this key are nothing elſe but the ultimate deſign of the comedy.

Etudiez la cour, & connoiſſez la ville:
L'une & l'autre eſt toujours en modéles fertile.
C'eſt par-là que Moliere illuſtrant ſes écrits
Peut-être de ſon art eût remporté le prix,
Si moins ami du peuple en ſes doctes peintures
Il n'eût pont fait ſouvent grimacer ſes figures,
Quitté pour le bouffon l'agréable & le fin,
Et ſans honte à Terence allié Tabarin *.

* *Boileau Art. Poet., chant.* 3.

In

In truth, *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus* united buffoonery and delicacy in a greater degree than *Moliere*; and for this they may be blamed. That which then pleaſed at *Athens*, and at *Rome*, was a tranſitory beauty, which had not ſufficient foundation in truth, and therefore the taſte changed. But, if we condemn thoſe ages for this, what age ſhall we ſpare? Let us refer every thing to permanent and univerſal taſte, and we ſhall find in *Ariſtophanes* at leaſt as much to commend as cenſure.

XII. But before we go on to his works, it may be allowed to make ſome reflections upon tragedy and comedy. Tragedy, though different according to the difference of times and writers, is uniform in its nature, being founded upon the paſſions which never change. With comedy it is otherwiſe. Whatever difference there is between *Eſchylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*; between *Corneille* and *Racine*; between the *French* and the *Greeks*, it will not be found ſufficient to conſtitute more than one ſpecies of tragedy.

Tragedy more uniform than comedy.

The works of thoſe great maſters are, in ſome reſpects, like the ſea-nymphs, of whom *Ovid* ſays, "That "their faces were not the ſame, yet ſo much alike that "they might be known to be ſiſters."

Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diverſa tamen, qualem decet eſſe ſororum.

The reaſon is, that the ſame paſſions give action and animation to them all. With reſpect to the comedies of *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus*, *Menander* and *Terence*, *Moliere*

liere and his imitators, if we compare them one with another, we ſhall find ſomething of a family likeneſs, but much leſs ſtrongly marked, on account of the different appearance which ridicule and pleaſantry take from the different manners of every age. They will not paſs for ſiſters, but for very diſtant relations. The muſe of *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus*, to ſpeak of her with juſtice, is a bacchanal at leaſt, whoſe malignant tongue is dipped in gall, or in poiſon dangerous as that of the aſpic or viper; but whoſe burſts of malice, and ſallies of wit, often give a blow where it is not expected. The Muſe of *Terence*, and conſequently of *Menander*, is an artleſs and unpainted beauty, of eaſy gaiety, whoſe features are rather delicate than ſtriking, rather ſoft than ſtrong, rather plain and modeſt than great and haughty, but always perfectly natural.

Ce ne'ſt pas un portrait, une image ſemblable:
C'eſt un fils, un amant, un pere véritable.

The Muſe of *Moliere* is not always plainly dreſſed, but takes airs of quality, and riſes above her original condition, ſo as to attire herſelf gracefully in magnificent apparel. In her manners ſhe mingles elegance with foolery, force with delicacy, and grandeur, or even haughtineſs, with plainneſs and modeſty. If ſometimes, to pleaſe the people, ſhe gives a looſe to farce, it is only the gay folly of a moment, from which ſhe immediately returns, and which laſts no longer than a ſlight intoxication. The firſt might be painted encircled with little ſatyrs, ſome groſsly fooliſh, the others delicate, but all

extremely

extremely licentious and malignant; monkeys always ready to laugh in your face, and to point out to indiscriminate ridicule, the good and the bad. The second may be shewn encircled with geniuses full of softness and of candour, taught to please by nature alone, and whose honeyed dialect is so much the more insinuating, as there is no temptation to distrust it. The last must be accompanied with the delicate laughter of the court, and that of the city somewhat more coarse, and neither the one nor the other can be separated from her. The Muse of *Aristophanes* and of *Plautus* can never be denied the honour of sprightliness, animation, and invention; nor that of *Menander* and *Terence* the praise of nature and of delicacy; to that of *Moliere* must be allowed the happy secret of uniting all the piquancy of the former, with a peculiar art which they did not know. Of these three sorts of merit, let us shew to each the justice that is due, let us in each separate the pure and the true from the false gold, without approving or condemning either the one or the other in the gross. If we must pronounce in general upon the taste of their writings, we must indisputably allow that *Menander*, *Terence*, and *Moliere*, will give most pleasure to a decent audience, and consequently that they approach nearer to the true beauty, and have less mixture of beauties purely relative, than *Plautus* and *Aristophanes*.

If we distinguish comedy by its subjects, we shall find three sorts among the *Greeks*, and as many among the *Latins*, all differently dressed: if we distinguish it by ages and authors, we shall again find three sorts; and we shall find three sorts a third time if we regard more closely

closely the subject. As the ultimate and general rules of all these sorts of comedy are the same, it will, perhaps, be agreeable to our purpose to sketch them out before we give a full display of the last class. I can do nothing better on this occasion than transcribe the twenty-fifth reflection of *Rapin* upon poetry in particular.

General rules of comedy.

XIII. "Comedy, says he *, is a representation of common life: its end "is to shew the faults of particular characters on the "stage, to correct the disorder of the people by the "fear of ridicule. Thus ridicule is the essential part "of a comedy. Ridicule may be in words, or in things; "it may be decent, or grotesque. To find what is ri-"diculous in every thing, is the gift merely of nature; "for all the actions of life have their bright and their "dark sides; something serious, and something merry. "But *Aristotle*, who has given rules for drawing tears, "has given none for raising laughter; for this is merely "the work of nature, and must proceed from genius, "with very little help from art or matter. The *Spa-"niards* have a turn to find the ridicule in things much "more than we: and the *Italians*, who are natural "comedians, have a better turn for expressing it; their "language is more proper for it than ours, by an air "of drollery which it can put on, and of which ours "may become capable when it shall be brought nearer "to perfection. In short, that agreeable turn, that "gaiety which yet maintains the delicacy of its charac-"ter without falling into dullness or into buffoonry,

* *Reflections sur la Poët.* p. 154. *Paris*, 1684.

"that

" that elegant raillery which is the flower of fine wit, is " the qualification which comedy requires. We muſt, " however, remember that the true artificial ridicule, " which is required on the theatre, muſt be only a tran- " ſcript of the ridicule which nature affords. Comedy " is naturally written, when, being on the theatre, a " man can fancy himſelf in a private family, or a par- " ticular part of the town, and meets with nothing but " what he really meets with in the world; for it is no " real comedy in which a man does not ſee his own " picture, and find his own manners and thoſe of the " people among whom he lives. *Menander* ſucceeded " only by this art among the *Greeks*: and the *Romans*, " when they ſat at *Terence*'s comedies, imagined them- " ſelves in a private party; for they found nothing there " which they had not been uſed to find in common " company. The great art of comedy is to adhere to " nature without deviation; to have general ſentiments " and expreſſions which all the world can underſtand: " for the writer muſt keep it always in his mind, that " the coarſeſt touches after nature will pleaſe more than " the moſt delicate with which nature is inconſiſtent. " However, low and mean words ſhould never be al- " lowed upon the ſtage, if they are not ſupported with " ſome kind of wit. Proverbs and vulgar ſmartneſſes " can never be ſuffered, unleſs they have ſomething in " them of nature and pleaſantry. This is the univerſal " principle of comedy; whatever is repreſented in this " manner muſt pleaſe, and nothing can ever pleaſe with- " out it. It is by application to the ſtudy of nature " alone that we arrive at probability, which is the only " infallible guide to theatrical ſucceſs: without this pro- " bability every thing is defective, and that which has

" it,

" it, is beautiful: he that follows this, can never go " wrong; and the moſt common faults of comedy pro- " ceed from the neglect of propriety, and the precipi- " tation of incidents. Care muſt likewiſe be taken that " the hints, made uſe of to introduce the incidents, are " not too ſtrong, that the ſpectator may enjoy the plea- " ſure of finding out their meaning: but commonly the " weak place in our comedy is the untying of the plot, " in which we almoſt always fail, on account of the dif- " ficulty which there is in diſentangling of what has been " perplexed. To perplex an intrigue is eaſy, the ima- " gination does it by itſelf; but it muſt be diſentangled " merely by the judgment, and is, therefore, ſeldom " done happily: and he that reflects a very little, will " find that moſt comedies are faulty by an unnatural " cataſtrophe. It remains to be examined whether co- " medy will allow pictures larger than the life, that this " ſtrength of the ſtrokes may make a deeper impreſſion " upon the mind of the ſpectators; that is, if a poet " may make a covetous man more covetous, and a " peeviſh man more impertinent and more troubleſome " than he really is. To which I anſwer, that this was " the practice of *Plautus*, whoſe aim was to pleaſe the " people; but that *Terence*, who wrote for gentlemen, " confined himſelf within the compaſs of nature, and " repreſented vice without addition or aggravation. " However, theſe extravagant characters, ſuch as the " *Citizen turned Gentleman*, and the *Hypochondriac Patient* " of *Moliere*, have lately ſucceeded at court, where de- " licacy is carried ſo far; but every thing, even to pro- " vincial interludes, is well received if it has but mer- " riment, for we had rather laugh than admire. Theſe " are the moſt important rules of comedy."

XIV. Theſe

XIV. These rules, indeed, are common to the three kinds which I have in my mind; but it is necessary to distinguish each from the rest, which may be done by diversity of matter, which always makes some diversity of management. The old and middle comedy simply represented real adventures: in the same way some passages of history and of fable might form a class of comedies, which should resemble it without having its faults; such is the *Amphitryon*. How many moral tales, how many adventures ancient and modern, how many little fables of *Æsop*, of *Phædrus*, of *Fontaine*, or some other ancient poet, would make pretty exhibitions, if they were all made use of as materials by skilful hands? And have we not seen some like *Timon the Man Hater*, that have been successful in this way? This sort chiefly regards the *Italians*. The ancient exhibition called a satyre, because the satyrs played their part in it, of which we have no other instance than the *Cyclops* of *Euripides*, has, without doubt, given occasion to the pastoral comedies, for which we are chiefly indebted to *Italy*, and which are there more cultivated than in *France*. It is, however, a kind of exhibition that would have its charms, if it was touched with elegance and without meanness; it is the pastoral put into action. To conclude, the new comedy, invented by *Menander*, has produced the comedy properly so called in our times. This is that which has for its subject general pictures of common life, and feigned names and adventures, whether of the court or of the city. This third kind is incontestably the most noble, and has received the strongest sanction from custom. It is likewise the most difficult to perform, because it is merely the work of invention, in which the poet has no help from real passages,

Three sorts of comedy.

paſſages, or perſons, which the tragick poet always makes uſe of. Who knows but by deep thinking, another kind of comedy may be invented wholly different from the three which I have mentioned; ſuch is the fruitfulneſs of comedy: but its courſe is already too wide for the diſcovery of new fields to be wiſhed, and on ground where we are already ſo apt to ſtumble, nothing is ſo dangerous as novelty imperfectly underſtood. This is the rock on which men have often ſplit in every kind of purſuit; to go no further, in that of grammar and language: it is better to endeavour after novelty in the manner of expreſſing common things, than to hunt for ideas out of the way, in which many a man loſes himſelf. The ill ſucceſs of that odd compoſition *Tragick Comedy*, a monſter wholly unknown to antiquity, ſufficiently ſhews the danger of novelty in attempts like theſe.

Whether tragedy or comedy be the harder to write.

XV. To finiſh the parallel of the two dramas, a queſtion may be revived equally common and important, which has been oftener propoſed than well decided: it is, whether comedy or tragedy be moſt eaſy or difficult to be well executed. I ſhall not have the temerity to determine poſitively a queſtion which ſo many great geniuſes have been afraid to decide: but if it be allowed to every literary man to give his reaſon for and againſt a mere work of genius, conſidered without reſpect to its good or bad tendency, I ſhall in a few words give my opinion, drawn from the nature of the two works, and the qualifications they demand. *Horace* * propoſes a queſtion nearly of the ſame kind: "It has been enquired, "whether a good poem be the work of art or nature:

* Poet. v. 407.

"for

"for my part, I do not ſee much to be done by art "without genius, nor by genius without knowledge. "The one is neceſſary to the other, and the ſucceſs de-"pends upon their co-operation." If we ſhould endeavour to accommodate matters in imitation of this deciſion of *Horace*, it were eaſy to ſay at once, that ſuppoſing two geniuſes equal, one tragick and the other comick, ſuppoſing the art likewiſe equal in each, one would be as eaſy or difficult as the other; but this, though ſatisfactory in the ſimple queſtion put by *Horace*, will not be ſufficient here. Nobody can doubt but genius and induſtry contribute their part to every thing valuable, and particularly to good poetry. But if genius and ſtudy were to be weighed one againſt the other, in order to diſcover which muſt contribute moſt to a good work, the queſtion would become more curious, and, perhaps, very difficult of ſolution. Indeed, though nature muſt have a great part of the expence of poetry, yet no poetry laſts long that is not very correct: the balance, therefore, ſeems to incline in favour of correction. For is it not known, that *Virgil* with leſs genius than *Ovid*, is yet valued more by men of exquiſite judgment; or, without going ſo far, *Boileau*, the *Horace* of our time, who compoſed with ſo much labour, and aſked *Moliere* where he found his rhyme ſo eaſily, has ſaid, "If I "write four words, I ſhall blot out three;" has not *Boileau*, by his poliſhed lines, retouched and retouched a thouſand times, gained the preference above the works of the ſame *Moliere*, which are ſo natural, and produced by ſo fruitful a genius! *Horace* was of that opinion, for when he is teaching the writers of his age the art of poetry, he tells them in plain terms, that *Rome* would

excel in writing as in arms, if the poets were not afraid of the labour, patience, and time required to polish their pieces. He thought every poem was bad that had not been brought ten times back to the anvil, and required that a work ſhould be kept nine years, as a child is nine months in the womb of its mother, to reſtrain that natural impatience which combine with ſloth and ſelf-love to diſguiſe faults; ſo certain is it that correction is the touch-ſtone of writing.

The queſtion propoſed comes back to the compariſon which I have been making between genius and correction, ſince we are now engaged in enquiring whether there is more or leſs difficulty in writing tragedy or comedy: for as we muſt compare nature and ſtudy one with another, ſince they muſt both concur more or leſs to make a poet; ſo if we will compare the labours of two different minds in different kinds of writing, we muſt, with regard to the authors, compare the force of genius, and with reſpect to the compoſition, the difficulties of the taſk.

The genius of the tragick and comick writer will be eaſily allowed to be remote from each other. Every performance, be what it will, requires a turn of mind which a man cannot confer upon himſelf: it is purely the gift of nature, which determines thoſe who have it, to purſue, almoſt in ſpite of themſelves, the taſte which predominates in their minds. *Paſcal* found in his childhood, that he was a mathematician, and *Vandyke* that he was born a painter. Sometimes this internal direction of the mind does not make ſuch evident diſcoveries of itſelf; but it is rare to find *Corneilles* who have lived long without knowing that they

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were poets. *Corneille* having once got ſome notion of his powers, tried a long time on all ſides to know what particular direction he ſhould take. He had firſt made an attempt in comedy, in an age when it was yet ſo groſs in *France* that it could give no pleaſure to polite perſons. *Melite* was ſo well received when he dreſſed her out, that ſhe gave riſe to a new ſpecies of comedy and comedians. This ſucceſs, which encouraged *Corneille* to purſue that ſort of comedy of which he was the firſt inventor, left him no reaſon to imagine, that he was one day to produce thoſe maſter-pieces of tragedy, which his muſe diſplayed afterwards with ſo much ſplendour; and yet leſs did he imagine, that his comick pieces, which, for want of any that were preferable, were then very much in faſhion, would be eclipſed by another genius * formed upon the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and who would add to their excellencies improvements of his own, and that this modiſh comedy, to which *Corneille*, as to his idol, dedicated his labours, would quickly be forgot. He wrote firſt *Medea*, and afterwards the *Cid*, and, by that prodigious flight of his genius, he diſcovered, though late, that nature had formed him to run in no other courſe but that of *Sophocles*. Happy genius! that, without rule or imitation, could at once take ſo high a flight; having once, as I may ſay, made himſelf an eagle, he never afterwards quitted the path, which he had worked out for himſelf, over the heads of the writers of his time: yet he retained ſome traces of the falſe taſte which infected the whole nation; but even in this,

* *Moliere.*

he deserves our admiration, since in time he changed it completely by the reflections he made, and those he occasioned. In short, *Corneille* was born for tragedy, as *Moliere* for comedy. *Moliere*, indeed, knew his own genius sooner, and was not less happy in procuring applause, though it often happened to him as to *Corneille*,

> *L'Ignorance & l'Erreur à ses naissantes piéces*
> *En habit de Marquis, en robes de Comtesses,*
> *Vinssent pour diffamer son chef-d'œuvre nouveau,*
> *Et secoüer la tête à l'endroit le plus beau.*

But, without taking any farther notice of the time at which either came to the knowledge of his own genius, let us suppose that the powers of tragedy and comedy were as equally shared between *Moliere* and *Corneille*, as they are different in their own nature, and then nothing more will remain than to compare the several difficulties of each composition, and to rate those difficulties together which are common to both.

It appears, first, that the tragick poet has in his subject an advantage over the comick, for he takes it from history; and his rival, at least in the more elevated and splendid comedy, is obliged to form it by his own invention. Now, it is not so easy as it might seem to find comick subjects capable of a new and pleasing form; but history is a source, if not inexhaustible, yet certainly so copious as never to leave the genius a-ground. It is true, that invention seems to have a wider field than history: real facts are limited in their number, but the facts which may

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be feigned have no end; but though, in this reſpect, invention may be allowed to have the advantage, is the difficulty of inventing to be accounted as nothing? To make a tragedy, is to get materials together, and to make uſe of them like a ſkilful architect; but to make a comedy, is to build like *Æſop* in the air. It is in vain to boaſt that the compaſs of invention is as wide as the extent of deſire: every thing is limited, and the mind of man like every thing elſe. Beſides, invention muſt be in conformity to nature; but diſtinct and remarkable characters are very rare in nature herſelf. *Moliere* has got hold on the principal touches of ridicule. If any man ſhould bring characters leſs ſtrong, he will be in danger of dulneſs. Where comedy is to be kept up by ſubordinate perſonages, it is in great danger. All the force of a picture muſt ariſe from the principal perſons, and not from the multitude cluſtered up together. In the ſame manner, a comedy, to be good, muſt be ſupported by a ſingle ſtriking character, and not by under-parts.

But, on the contrary, tragick characters are without number, though of them the general out-lines are limited; but diſſimulation, jealouſy, policy, ambition, deſire of dominion, and other intereſts and paſſions, are various without end, and take a thouſand different forms in different ſituations of hiſtory; ſo that as long as there is tragedy, there may be always novelty. Thus the jealous and diſſembling *Mithridates*, ſo happily painted by *Racine*, will not ſtand in the way of a poet who ſhall attempt a jealous and diſſembling *Tiberius*. The ſtormy violence of an *Achilles* will always leave room for the ſtormy violence of *Alexander*.

But the case is very different with avarice, trifling vanity, hypocrisy, and other vices, considered as ridiculous. It would be safer to double and treble all the tragedies of our greatest poets, and use all their subjects over and over, as has been done with *Oedipus* and *Sophonisba*, than to bring again upon the stage in five acts a *Miser*, a *Citizen turned Gentleman*, a *Tartuffe*, and other subjects sufficiently known. Not that these popular vices are less capable of diversification, or are less varied by different circumstances, than the vices and passions of heroes; but that if they were to be brought over again in comedies, they would be less distinct, less exact, less forcible, and, consequently, less applauded. Pleasantry and ridicule must be more strongly marked than heroism and pathos, which support themselves by their own force. Besides, though these two things of so different natures could support themselves equally in equal variety, which is very far from being the case; yet comedy, as it now stands, consists not in incidents, but in characters. Now it is by incidents only that characters are diversified, as well upon the stage of comedy, as upon the stage of life. Comedy, as *Moliere* has left it, resembles the pictures of manners drawn by the celebrated *La Bruyere*. Would any man after him venture to draw them over again, he would expose himself to the fate of those who have ventured to continue them. For instance, what could we add to his character of the *Absent Man?* Shall we put him in other circumstances? The principal strokes of absence of mind will always be the same; and there are only those striking touches which are fit for a comedy, of which the end is painting after nature, but

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with ſtrength and ſprightlineſs like the deſigns of *Callot*. If comedy were among us what it is in *Spain*, a kind of romance, conſiſting of many circumſtances and intrigues, perplexed and diſentangled, ſo as to ſurpriſe; if it was nearly the ſame with that which *Corneille* practiſed in his time; if, like that of *Terence*, it went no farther than to draw the common portraits of ſimple nature, and ſhew us fathers, ſons, and rivals; notwithſtanding the uniformity, which would always prevail as in the plays of *Terence*, and probably in thoſe of *Menander*, whom he imitated in his four firſt pieces, there would always be a reſource found either in variety of incidents, like thoſe of the *Spaniards*, or in the repetition of the ſame characters in the way of *Terence*: but the caſe is now very different; the publick calls for new characters and nothing elſe. Multiplicity of accidents, and the laborious contrivance of an intrigue, are not now allowed to ſhelter a weak genius that would find great conveniences in that way of writing. Nor does it ſuit the taſte of comedy, which requires an air leſs conſtrained, and ſuch freedom and eaſe of manners as admits nothing of the romantick. She leaves all the pomp of ſudden events to the novels, or little romances, which were the diverſion of the laſt age. She allows nothing but a ſucceſſion of characters reſembling nature, and falling in without any apparent contrivance. *Racine* has likewiſe taught us to give to tragedy the ſame ſimplicity of air and action; he has endeavoured to diſentangle it from that great number of incidents, which made it rather a ſtudy than diverſion to the audience, and which ſhew the poet not ſo much to abound in invention, as to be deficient in

 taſte.

taste. But, notwithstanding all that he has done, or that we can do, to make it simple, it will always have the advantage over comedy in the number of its subjects, because it admits more variety of situations and events, which give variety and novelty to the characters. A miser, copied after nature, will always be the miser of *Plautus* or *Moliere*; but a *Nero*, or a prince like *Nero*, will not always be the hero of *Racine*. Comedy admits of so little intrigue, that the miser cannot be shewn in any such position as will make his picture new; but the great events of tragedy may put *Nero* in such circumstances as to make him wholly another character.

But, in the second place, over and above the subjects, may we not say something concerning the final purpose of comedy and tragedy? The purpose of the one is to divert, and the other to move; and of these two, which is the easier? To go to the bottom of those purposes; to move is to strike those strings of the heart which is most natural, terror and pity: to divert is to make one laugh, a thing which indeed is natural enough, but more delicate. The gentleman and the rustick have both sensibility and tenderness of heart, perhaps in greater or less degree; but as they are men alike, the heart is moved by the same touches. They both love likewise to send their thoughts abroad, and to expand themselves in merriment; but the springs which must be touched for this purpose, are not the same in the gentleman and the rustick. The passions depend on nature, and merriment upon education. The clown will laugh at a waggery, and the gentleman only at a stroke of delicate conceit. The spectators of a tragedy, if they have

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but a little knowledge, are almoſt all on a level; but with reſpect to comedy, we have three claſſes, if not more, the people, the learned, and the court. If there are certain caſes in which all may be comprehended in the term people, this is not one of thoſe caſes. Whatever father *Rapin* may ſay about it, we are more willing even to admire than to laugh. Every man that has any power of diſtinction, laughs as rarely as the philoſopher admires; for we are not to reckon thoſe fits of laughter which are not incited by nature, and which are given merely to complaiſance, to reſpect, flattery, and good-humour; ſuch as break out at ſayings which pretend to ſmartneſs in aſſemblies. The laughter of the theatre is of another ſtamp. Every reader and ſpectator judges of wit by his own ſtandard, and meaſures it by his capacity, or by his condition: the different capacities and conditions of men make them diverted on very different occaſions. If, therefore, we conſider the end of the tragick and comick poet, the comedian muſt be involved in much more difficulties, without taking in the obſtructions to be encountered equally by both, in an art which conſiſts in raiſing the paſſions, or the mirth of a great multitude. The tragedian has little to do but to reflect upon his own thought, and draw from his heart thoſe ſentiments which will certainly make their way to the hearts of others, if he found them in his own. The other muſt take many forms, and change himſelf almoſt into as many perſons, as he undertakes to ſatisfy and divert.

It may be ſaid, that, if genius be ſuppoſed equal, and ſucceſs ſuppoſed to depend upon genius, the buſineſs will be equally eaſy and difficult to one author

and

and to the other. This objection is of no weight; for the ſame queſtion ſtill recurs, which is, whether of theſe two kinds of genius is more valuable or more rare. If we proceed by example, and not by reaſoning, we ſhall decide I think in favour of comedy.

It may be ſaid, that, if merely art be conſidered, it will require deeper thoughts to form a plan juſt and ſimple; to produce happy ſurpriſes without apparent contrivance; to carry a paſſion ſkilfully through its gradations to its height; to arrive happily to the end by always moving from it, as *Ithaca* ſeemed to fly *Ulyſſes*; to unite the acts and ſcenes; and to raiſe by inſenſible degrees a ſtriking edifice, of which the leaſt merit ſhall be exactneſs of proportion. It may be added, that in comedy this art is infinitely leſs, for there the characters come upon the ſtage with very little artifice or plot: the whole ſcheme is ſo connected that we ſee it at once, and the plan and diſpoſition of the parts make a ſmall part of its excellence, in compariſon of a gloſs of pleaſantry diffuſed over each ſcene, which is more the happy effect of a lucky moment, than of long conſideration.

Theſe objections, and many others, which ſo fruitful a ſubject might eaſily ſuggeſt, it is not difficult to refute: and if we were to judge by the impreſſion made on the mind by tragedies and comedies of equal excellence, perhaps, when we examine thoſe impreſſions, it will be found that a ſally of pleaſantry, which diverts all the world, required more thought than a paſſage which gave the higheſt pleaſure in tragedy; and to this determination we ſhall be more inclined when a cloſer examination ſhall ſhew us, that

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a happy vein of tragedy is opened and effused at less expence, than a well-placed witticism in comedy has required merely to assign its place.

It would be too much to dwell long upon such a digression; and as I have no business to decide the question, I leave both that and my arguments to the taste of each particular reader, who will find what is to be said for or against it. My purpose was only to say of comedy, considered as a work of genius, all that a man of letters can be supposed to deliver without departing from his character, and without palliating in any degree the corrupt use which has been almost always made of an exhibition which in its nature might be innocent; but has been vicious from the time that it has been infected with the wickedness of men. It is not for public exhibitions that I am now writing, but for literary inquiries. The stage is too much frequented, and books too much neglected. Yet it is to the literature of *Greece* and *Rome* that we are indebted for that valuable taste, which will be insensibly lost by the affected negligence which now prevails of having recourse to originals. If reason has been a considerable gainer, it must be confessed that taste has been somewhat a loser.

To return to *Aristophanes:* so many great men of antiquity, through a long succession of ages, down to our times, have set a value upon his works, that we cannot naturally suppose them contemptible, notwithstanding the essential faults with which he may be justly reproached. It is sufficient to say, that he was esteemed by *Plato* and *Cicero*; and to conclude by that which does him most honour, but still falls short

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of juſtification, the ſtrong and ſprightly eloquence of St. *Chryſoſtom* drew its ſupport from the maſculine and vigorous atticiſm of this ſarcaſtic comedian, to whom the father paid the ſame regard as *Alexander* to *Homer*, that of putting his works under his pillow, that he might read them at night before he ſlept, and in the morning as ſoon as he awaked.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

TO

BRUMOY's GREEK THEATRE.

I. THUS I have given a faithful extract of the remains of *Aristophanes*. That I have not shewn them in their true form, I am not afraid that any body will complain. I have given an account of every thing as far as it was consistent with moral decency. No pen, however cynical or heathenish, would venture to produce in open day the horrid passages which I have put out of sight; and instead of regretting any part that I have suppressed, the very suppression will easily shew to what degree the *Athenians* were infected with licentiousness of imagination and corruption of principles. If the taste of antiquity allows us to preserve what time and barbarity have hitherto spared, religion and virtue at least oblige us not to spread it before the eyes of mankind. To end this work in an useful manner, let us examine in a few words the four particulars which are most striking in the eleven pieces of *Aristophanes*.

Summary of the four articles treated of in this discourse.

II. The first is the character of the ancient comedy, which has no likeness to any thing in nature. Its genius is so

Character of ancient comedy.

wild

wild and ſtrange, that it ſcarce admits a definition. In what claſs of comedy muſt we place it? It appears to me to be a ſpecies of writing by itſelf. If we had *Phrynicus*, *Plato*, *Eupolis*, *Critinus Ameipſias*, and ſo many other celebrated rivals of *Ariſtophanes*, of whom all that we can find are a few fragments ſcattered in *Plutarch*, *Athenias*, and *Suidas*, we might compare them with our poet, ſettle the general ſcheme, obſerve the minuter differences, and form a complete notion of their comick ſtage. But for want of all this we can fix only on *Ariſtophanes*, and it is true that he may be in ſome meaſure ſufficient to furniſh a tolerable judgment of the old comedy; for if we believe him, and who can be better credited? he was the moſt daring of all his brethren the poets, who practiſed the ſame kind of writing. Upon this ſuppoſition we may conclude, that the comedy of thoſe days conſiſted in an allegory drawn out and continued; an allegory never very regular, but often ingenious, and almoſt always carried beyond ſtrict propriety, of ſatire keen and biting, but diverſified, ſprightly and unexpected; ſo that the wound was given before it was perceived. Their points of ſatire were thunderbolts, and their wild figures, with their variety and quickneſs, had the effect of lightning. Their imitation was carried even to reſemblance of perſons, and their common entertainments was a parody of rival poets joined, if I may ſo expreſs it, with a parody of manners and habits.

But it would be tedious to draw out to the reader that which he will already have perceived better than myſelf. I have no deſign to anticipate his reflections; and therefore ſhall only ſketch the picture, which he muſt finiſh by himſelf: he will purſue the ſubject farther, and form

to himſelf a view of the common and domeſtick life of the *Athenians*, of which this kind of comedy was a picture, with ſome aggravation of the features: he will bring within his view all the cuſtoms, manners, and vices, and the whole character of the people of *Athens*. By bringing all theſe together he will fix in his mind an indelible idea of a people in whom ſo many contrarieties were united, and who in a manner that can ſcarce be expreſſed, connected nobility with the caſt of *Athens*, wiſdom with madneſs, rage for novelty with a bigotry for antiquity, the politeneſs of a monarchy with the roughneſs of a republick, refinement with coarſeneſs, independence with ſlavery, haughtineſs with ſervile compliance, ſeverity of manners with debauchery, a kind of irreligion with piety. We ſhall do this in reading; as in travelling through different nations we make ourſelves maſters of their characters by combining their different appearances, and reflecting upon what we ſee.

The government of the *Athenians*.

III. The government of *Athens* makes a fine part of the ancient comedy. In moſt ſtates the myſtery of government is confined within the walls of the cabinet; even in commonwealths it does not paſs but through five or ſix heads, who rule thoſe that think themſelves the rulers. Oratory dares not touch it, and comedy ſtill leſs. *Cicero* himſelf did not ſpeak freely upon ſo nice a ſubject as the *Roman* commonwealth; but the *Athenian* eloquence was informed of the whole ſecret, and ſearches the receſſes of the human mind, to fetch it out and expoſe it to the people. *Demoſthenes*, and his contemporaries, ſpeak with a freedom at which we are aſtoniſhed, notwithſtanding the notion we have of a popular government, yet at what time but this did comedy adventure to claim the ſame

rights

rights with civil eloquence? The *Italian* comedy of the laſt age, all daring as it was, could for its boldneſs come into no competition with the ancient. It was limited to general ſatire, which was ſometimes carried ſo far, that the malignity was overlooked in an attention to the wild exaggeration, the unexpected ſtrokes, the pungent wit, and the malignity concealed under ſuch wild flights as became the character of *Harlequin*. But though it ſo far reſembled *Ariſtophanes*, our age is yet at a great diſtance from his, and the *Italian* comedy from his ſcenes. But with reſpect to the liberty of cenſuring the government, there can be no compariſon made of one age or comedy with another. *Ariſtophanes* is the only writer of his kind, and is for that reaſon of the higheſt value. A powerful ſtate ſet at the head of *Greece*, is the ſubject of his merriment, and that merriment is allowed by the ſtate itſelf. This appears to us an inconſiſtency; but it is true that it was the intereſt of the ſtate to allow it, though not always without inconveniency. It was a reſtraint upon the ambition and tyranny of ſingle men, a matter of great importance to a people ſo very jealous of their liberty. *Cleon*, *Alcibiades*, *Lamachus*, and many other generals and magiſtrates, were kept under by fear of the comick ſtrokes of a poet ſo little cautious as *Ariſtophanes*. He was once indeed in danger of paying dear for his wit. He profeſſed, as he tells us himſelf, to be of great uſe by his writings to the ſtate; and rated his merit ſo high as to complain that he was not rewarded. But, under pretence of this publick ſpirit, he ſpared no part of the publick conduct, neither was government, councils, revenues, popular aſſemblies, ſecret proceedings in judicature, choice of miniſters, the go-

vernment,

vernment of the nobles, or that of the people ſpared.

The *Acharnians*, the *Peace*, and the *Birds*, are eternal monuments of the boldneſs of the poet, who was not afraid of cenſuring the government for the obſtinate continuance of a ruinous war, for undertaking new ones, and feeding itſelf with wild imaginations, and running to deſtruction as it did for an idle point of honour.

Nothing can be more reproachful to the *Athenians* than his play of the *Knights*, when he repreſents under an allegory that may be eaſily ſeen through, the nation of the *Athenians* as an old doating fellow tricked by a new man, ſuch as *Cleon* and his companions, who were of the ſame ſtamp.

A ſingle glance upon *Lyſiſtrata*, and the *Female Orators*, muſt raiſe aſtoniſhment when the *Athenian* policy is ſet below the ſchemes of women, whom the author makes ridiculous for no other reaſon than to bring contempt upon their huſbands, who held the helm of government.

The *Waſps* is written to expoſe the madneſs of people for lawſuits and litigations, and a multitude of iniquities are laid open.

It may eaſily be gathered, that notwithſtanding the wiſe laws of *Solon*, which they ſtill profeſſed to follow, the government was falling into decay, for we are not to underſtand the jeſt of *Ariſtophanes* in the literal ſenſe. It is plain that the corruption, though we ſhould ſuppoſe it but half as much as we are told, was very great, for it ended in the deſtruction of *Athens*, which could ſcarce raiſe its head again, after it had been taken by *Lyſander*. Though we conſider *Ariſtophanes* as a comick

writer who deals in exaggeration, and bring down his ſtories to their true ſtandard, we ſtill find that the fundamentals of their government fail in almoſt all the eſſential points. That the people were inveigled by men of ambition; that all councils and decrees had their original in factious combinations; that avarice and private intereſt animated all their policy to the hurt of the publick; that their revenues were ill managed, their allies improperly treated; that their good citizens were ſacrificed, and the bad put in places; that a mad eagerneſs for judicial litigation took up all their attention within, and that war was made without, not ſo much with wiſdom and precaution, as with temerity and good luck; that the love of novelty and faſhion in the manner of managing the publick affairs was a madneſs univerſally prevalent; and that *Melanthius* ſays in *Plutarch*, the republick of *Athens* was continued only by the perpetual diſcord of thoſe that managed its affairs. This remedied the diſhonour by preſerving the equilibrium, and was kept always in action by eloquence and comedy.

This is what in general may be drawn from the reading *Ariſtophanes*. The ſagacity of the readers will go farther: they will compare the different forms of government by which that tumultuous people endeavoured to regulate or increaſe the democracy, which forms were all fatal to the ſtate, becauſe they were not built upon laſting foundations, and had all in them the principles of deſtruction. A ſtrange contrivance it was to perpetuate a ſtate by changing the juſt proportion which *Solon* had wiſely ſettled between the nobles and the people; and by

opening a gate to the ſkilful ambition of thoſe who had art or courage enough to force themſelves into the government by means of the people, whom they flattered with protections that they might more certainly cruſh them.

The tragick poets rallied.

IV. Another part of the works of *Ariſtophanes* are his pleaſant reflections upon the moſt celebrated poets: the ſhafts which he lets fly at the three heroes of tragedy, and particularly at *Euripides*, might incline the reader to believe that he had little eſteem for thoſe great men; and that probably the ſpectators that applauded him were of his opinion. This concluſion would not be juſt, as I have already ſhewn by arguments, which, if I had not offered them, the reader might have diſcovered better than I. But that I may leave no room for objections, and prevent any ſhadow of captiouſneſs, I ſhall venture to obſerve, that poſterity will not conſider *Racine* as leſs a maſter of the *French* ſtage becauſe his plays were ridiculed by parodies. Parody always fixes upon the beſt pieces, and was more to the taſte of the *Greeks* than to ours. At preſent the high theatres give it up to ſtages of inferior rank; but in *Athens* the comick theatre conſidered parody as its principal ornament, for a reaſon which is worth examining. The ancient comedy was not like ours, a remote and delicate imitation; it was the art of groſs mimickry, and would have been ſuppoſed to have miſſed its aim, had it not copied the mien, the walk, the dreſs, the motions of the face of thoſe whom it exhibited. Now parody is an imitation of this kind; it is a change of ſerious to burleſque, by a ſlight variation of words, inflection of voice, or an imperceptible

art of mimickry. Parody is to poetry as a masque to a face. As the tragedies of *Eschylus*, of *Sophocles*, and of *Euripides*, were much in fashion, and were known by memory to the people, the parodies upon them would naturally strike and please, when they were accompanied by the grimaces of a good comedian, who mimicked with archness a serious character. Such is the malignity of human nature; we love to laugh at those whom we esteem most, and by this make ourselves some recompence for the unwilling homage which we pay to merit. The parodies upon these poets made by *Aristophanes*, ought to be considered rather as encomiums than satires. They give us occasion to examine whether the criticisms are just or not in themselves: but what is more important, they afford no proof that *Euripides* or his predecessors wanted the esteem of *Aristophanes* or his age. The statues raised to their honour, the respect paid by the *Athenians* to their writings, and the careful preservation of those writings themselves, are immortal testimonies in their favour, and make it unnecessary for me to stop any longer upon so plausible a solution of so frivolous an objection.

Freqnent ridicule of the gods.

V. The most troublesome difficulty, and that which, so far as I know, has not yet been cleared to satisfaction, is the contemptuous manner in which *Aristophanes* treats the gods. Though I am persuaded in my own mind that I have found the true solution of this question, I am not sure that it will make more impression than that of *M. Boivin*, who contents himself with saying, that every thing was allowed to the comick poets; and that even Atheism was permitted to the licentiousness of the

the ſtage: that the *Athenians* applauded all that made them laugh; and believed that *Jupiter* himſelf laughed with them at the ſmart ſayings of a poet. Mr. *Collier*, an *Engliſhman*, in his remarks upon their ſtage, attempts to prove that *Ariſtophanes* was an open Atheiſt. For my part I am not ſatisfied with the account either of one or the other, and think it better to venture a new ſyſtem, of which I have already dropt ſome hints in this work. The truth is, that the *Athenians* profeſſed to be great laughers; always ready for merriment on whatever ſubject. But it cannot be conceived that *Ariſtophanes* ſhould, without puniſhment, publiſh himſelf an Atheiſt, unleſs we ſuppoſe that Atheiſm was the opinion likewiſe of the ſpectators, and of the judges commiſſioned to examine the plays; and yet this cannot be ſuſpected of thoſe who boaſted themſelves the moſt religious nation, and naturally the moſt ſuperſtitious of all *Greece*. How can we ſuppoſe thoſe to be Atheiſts who paſſed ſentence upon *Diagoras*, *Socrates*, and *Alcibiades*, for impiety? Theſe are glaring inconſiſtencies. To ſay like *M. Boivin*, for ſake of getting clear of the difficulty, that *Alcibiades*, *Socrates*, and *Diagoras*, attacked religion ſeriouſly, and were therefore not allowed, but that *Ariſtophanes* did it in jeſt, or was authoriſed by cuſtom, would be to trifle with the difficulty, and not to clear it. Though the *Athenians* loved merriment, it is not likely that if *Ariſtophanes* had profeſſed Atheiſm, they would have ſpared him more than *Socrates*, who had as much life and pleaſantry in his diſcourſes, as the poet in his comedies. The pungent raillery of *Ariſtophanes*, and the fondneſs of the *Athenians* for it, are therefore not the

true reaſon why the poet was ſpared when *Socrates* was condemned. I ſhall now ſolve the queſtion with great brevity.

The true anſwer to this queſtion is given by *Plutarch* in his treatiſe of reading of the poets. *Plutarch* attempts to prove that youth is not to be prohibited the reading of the poets; but to be cautioned againſt ſuch parts as may have bad effects. They are firſt to be prepoſſeſſed with this leading principle, that poetry is falſe and fabulous. He then enumerates at length the fables which *Homer* and other poets have invented about their deities; and concludes thus: "When therefore there is found in "poetical compoſitions any thing ſtrange and ſhocking, with reſpect to gods, or demi-gods, or concerning the virtue of any excellent and renowned "characters, he that ſhould receive theſe fictions "as truth would be corrupted by an erroneous opi-"nion: but he that always keeps in his mind the "fables and alluſions, which it is the buſineſs of "poetry to contrive, will not be injured by theſe "ſtories, nor receive any ill impreſſions upon his "thoughts, but will be ready to cenſure himſelf, if "at any time he happens to be afraid, leſt *Neptune* "in his rage ſhould ſplit the earth, and lay open the "infernal regions." Some pages afterwards, he tells us, "That religion is a thing difficult of compre-"henſion, and above the underſtanding of poets; which "it is," ſays he, "neceſſary to have in mind when we "read their fables."

The *Pagans* therefore had their fables, which they diſtinguiſhed from their religion; for no one can be perſuaded that *Ovid* intended his *Metamorphoſes* as a

true reprefentation of the religion of the *Romans*. The poets were allowed their imaginations about their gods, as things which have no regard to the publick worfhip. Upon this principle, I fay, as I faid before, there was amongft the *Pagans* two forts of religion; one a poetical, and a real religion: one practical, the other theatrical; a mythology for the poets, a theology for ufe. They had fables, and a worfhip, which though founded upon fable, was yet very different.

Diagoras, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and the philofophers of *Athens*, with *Cicero*, their admirer, and the other pretended wife men of *Rome*, are men by themfelves. Thefe were the Atheifts with refpect to the ancients. We muft not therefore look into *Plato*, or into *Cicero* for the real religion of the *Pagans*, as diftinct from the fabulous. Thefe two authors involve themfelves in the clouds, that their opinions may not be difcovered. They durft not openly attack the real religion; but deftroyed it by attacking fable.

To diftinguifh here with exactnefs the agreement or difference between fable and religion, is not at prefent my intention: it is not eafy * to fhew with exactnefs what was the *Athenian* notion of the nature of the gods whom they worfhipped. *Plutarch* himfelf tells us, that this was a thing very difficult for the philofophers. It is fufficient for me that the mythology and theology of the ancients were different at the bottom; that the names of the gods continued the fame; and that long cuftom gave up one to the caprices of the poets, without fuppofing the other

* See St. *Paul* upon the fubject of the *Ignoto Deo*.

affected by them. This being once settled upon the authority of the ancients themselves, I am no longer surprised to see *Jupiter*, *Minerva*, *Neptune*, *Bacchus*, appear upon the stage in the comedy of *Aristophanes*; and at the same time receiving incense in the temples of *Athens*. This is, in my opinion, the most reasonable account of a thing so obscure; and I am ready to give up my system to any other, by which the *Athenians* shall be made more consistent with themselves; those *Athenians* who sat laughing at the gods of *Aristophanes*, while they condemned *Socrates* for having appeared to despise the gods of his country.

The *Mimi* and *Pantomimes*.

VI. A word is now to be spoken of the *Mimi*, which had some relation to comedy. This appellation was, by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, given to certain dramatick performances, and to the actors that played them. The denomination sufficiently shews, that their art consisted in imitation and buffoonery. Of their works, nothing, or very little, is remaining; so that they can only be considered by the help of some passages in authors: from which little is to be learned that deserves consideration. I shall extract the substance, as I did with respect to the chorus, without losing time, by defining all the different species, or producing all the quotations, which would give the reader more trouble than instruction. He that desires fuller instructions may read *Vossius*, *Valois*, *Saumaises*, and *Gataker*, of whose compilations, however learned, I should think it shame to be the author.

The *Mimi* had their original from comedy, of which at its first appearance they made a part; for their mimic actors always played and exhibited grotesque

tefque dances in the comedies. The jealoufy of rivalfhip afterwards broke them off from the comick actors, and made them a company by themfelves. But to fecure their reception, they borrowed from comedy all its drollery, wildnefs, groffnefs, and licentioufnefs. This amufement they added to their dances, and they produced what are now called farces, or burlettos. Thefe farces had not the regularity or delicacy of comedies; they were only a fucceffion of fingle fcenes contrived to raife laughter; formed or unravelled without order and without connexion. They had no other end but to make the people laugh. Now and then there might be good fentences, like the fentences of *P. Syrus*, that are yet left us: but the ground-work was low comedy; and any thing of greater dignity drops in by chance. We muft however imagine, that this odd fpecies of the drama rofe at length to fomewhat a higher character, fince we are told that *Plato* the philofopher laid the *Mimi* of *Sophron* under his pillow, and they were found there after his death. But in general we may fay with truth, that it always difcovered the meannefs of its original, like a falfe pretenfion to nobility, in which the cheat is always difcovered through the concealment of fictitious fplendor.

Thefe *Mimi* were of two forts, of which the length was different, but the purpofes the fame. The *Mimi* of one fpecies were fhort; thofe of the other long, and not quite fo grotefque. Thefe two kinds were fubdivided into many fpecies, diftinguifhed by the dreffes and characters, fuch as fhews drunkards, phyficians, men, and women.

Thus

Thus far of the *Greeks*. The *Romans* having borrowed of them the more noble ſhews of tragedy and comedy, were not content till they had their rhapſodies. They had their *planipedes*, who played with flat ſoles, that they might have the more agility; and their *Sannions*, whoſe head was ſhaved, that they might box the better. There is no need of naming here all who had a name for theſe diverſions among the *Greeks* and *Romans*. I have ſaid enough, and perhaps too much of this abortion of comedy, which drew upon itſelf the contempt of good men, the cenſures of the magiſtrates, and the indignation of the fathers of the church *.

Another ſet of players were called *Pantomimes:* theſe were at leaſt ſo far preferable to the former, that they gave no offence to the ears. They ſpoke only to the eyes; but with ſuch art of expreſſion, that without the utterance of a ſingle word, they repreſented, as we are told, a complete tragedy or comedy, in the ſame manner as dumb *Harlequin* is exhibited on our theatres. Theſe *Pantomimes* among the *Greeks* firſt mingled ſinging with their dances; afterwards, about the time of *Livius Andronicus*, the ſongs were performed by one part, and the dances by another. Afterwards, in the time of *Auguſtus*, when they were ſent for to *Rome*, for the diverſions of the people, whom he had enſlaved, they played comedies without ſongs or vocal utterance; but by the ſprightlineſs, activity, and efficacy of their geſtures; or, as *Sidonius*

* It is the licentiouſneſs of the *Mimi* and *Pantomimes*, againſt which the cenſure of the Holy Fathers particularly breaks out, as againſt a thing irregular and indecent, without ſuppoſing it much connected with the cauſe of religion.

Apollinaris

Apollinaris expreſſes it, *clauſis faucibus, et loquente geſtu,* they not only exhibited things and paſſions, but even the moſt delicate diſtinctions of paſſions, and the ſlighteſt circumſtances of facts. We muſt not however imagine, at leaſt in my opinion, that the *Pantomimes* did literally repreſent regular tragedies or comedies by the mere motions of their bodies. We may juſtly determine, notwithſtanding all their agility, their repreſentations would at laſt be very incomplete: yet we may ſuppoſe, with good reaſon, that their action was very lively; and that the art of imitation went great lengths, ſince it raiſed the admiration of the wiſeſt men, and made the people mad with eagerneſs. Yet when we read that one *Hylus,* the pupil of one *Pylades,* in the time of *Auguſtus,* divided the applauſes of the people with his maſter, when they repreſented *Oedipus,* or when *Juvenal* tells us, that *Bathillus* played *Leda,* and other things, of the ſame kind, it is not eaſy to believe that a ſingle man, without ſpeaking a word, could exhibit tragedies or comedies, and make ſtarts and bounds ſupply the place of vocal articulation. Notwithſtanding the obſcurity of this whole matter, one may know what to admit as certain, or how far a repreſentation could be carried by dance, poſture, and grimace. Among theſe artificial dances, of which we know nothing but the names, there was as early as the time of *Ariſtophanes* ſome extremely indecent. Theſe were continued in *Italy* from the time of *Auguſtus,* long after the emperors. It was a publick miſchief, which contributed in ſome meaſure to the decay and ruin of the *Roman* empire. To have a due deteſtation of theſe licentious entertainments, there is no need of

any recourſe to the fathers; the wiſer *Pagans* tell us very plainly what they thought of them. I have made this mention of the *Mimi* and *Pantomimes*, only to ſhew how the moſt noble of publick ſpectacles were corrupted and abuſed, and to conduct the reader to the end through every road, and through all the bye-paths of human wit, from *Homer* and *Eſchylus* to our own time.

Wanderings of the human mind in the birth and progreſs of theatrical repreſentations.

VII. That we may conclude this work by applying the principles laid down at the beginning, and extend it through the whole, I deſire the reader to recur to that point where I have repreſented the human mind as beginning the courſe of the drama. The chorus was firſt a hymn to *Bacchus*, produced by accident; art brought it to perfection, and delight made it a publick diverſion. *Theſpis* made a ſingle actor play before the people; this was the beginning of theatrical ſhews. *Eſchylus*, taking the idea of the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*, animated, if I may ſo expreſs it, the epick poem, and gave a dialogue in place of ſimple recitation, puts the whole into action, and ſets it before the eyes, as if it was a preſent and real tranſaction: he gives the chorus * an intereſt in the ſcenes, contrives habits of dignity and theatrical decorations. In a word, he gives both to tragedy; or, more properly, draws it from the boſom of the epick poem. She made her ap-

* *Eſchylus*, in my opinion, as well as the other poets his contemporaries, retained the chorus, not merely becauſe it was the faſhion, but becauſe examining tragedy to the bottom, they found it not rational to conceive, that an action great and ſplendid, like the revolution of a ſtate, could paſs without witneſſes.

pearance

pearance ſparkling with graces, and diſplayed ſuch majeſty as gained every heart at the firſt view. *Sophocles* conſiders her more nearly, with the eyes of a critick, and finds that ſhe has ſomething ſtill about her rough and ſwelling: he diveſts her of her falſe ornaments, teaches her a more regular walk, and more familiar dignity. *Euripides* was of opinion, that ſhe ought to receive ſtill more ſoftneſs and tenderneſs; he teaches her the new art of pleaſing by ſimplicity, and gives her the charms of graceful negligence; ſo that he makes her ſtand in ſuſpence, whether ſhe appears moſt to advantage in the dreſs of *Sophocles* ſparkling with gems, or in that of *Euripides*, which is more ſimple and modeſt. Both indeed are elegant; but the elegance is of different kinds, between which no judgment as yet has decided the prize of ſuperiority.

We can now trace it no farther; its progreſs amongſt the *Greeks* is out of ſight. We muſt paſs at once to the time of *Auguſtus*, where *Apollo* and the Muſes quitted their ancient reſidence in *Greece*, to fix their abode in *Italy*. But it is vain to aſk queſtions of *Melpomene*; ſhe is obſtinately ſilent, and we only know from ſtrangers her power amongſt the *Romans*. *Seneca* endeavours to make her ſpeak; but the gaudy ſhew with which he rather loads than adorns her, makes us think that he took ſome phantom of *Melpomene* for the Muſe herſelf.

Another flight, equally rapid with that to *Rome*, muſt carry us through thouſands of years, from *Rome* to *France*. There in the time of *Lewis* XIV. we ſee the mind of man giving birth to tragedy a ſecond time, as if the *Greek* tragedy had been utterly forgot. In the place of *Eſchylus*, we have our *Rotrou*. In *Corneille* we have another *Sophocles*, and in *Racine* a ſecond *Euripides*.

Thus

Thus is tragedy raiſed from her aſhes, carried to the utmoſt point of greatneſs, and ſo dazzling that ſhe prefers herſelf to herſelf. Surpriſed to ſee herſelf produced again in *France* in ſo ſhort a time, and nearly in the ſame manner as before in *Greece*, ſhe is diſpoſed to believe that her fate is to make a ſhort tranſition from her birth to her perfection, like the goddeſs that iſſued from the brain of *Jupiter*.

If we look back on the other ſide to the riſe of comedy, we ſhall ſee it hatched by *Margites* from the *Odyſſey* of *Homer*, in imitation of her eldeſt ſiſter; but we ſee her under the conduct of *Ariſtophanes* become licentious and petulant, taking airs to herſelf which the magiſtrates were obliged to cruſh. *Menander* reduced her to bounds, taught her at once gaiety and politeneſs, and enabled her to correct vice, without ſhocking the offenders. *Plautus*, among the *Romans*, to whom we muſt now paſs, united the earlier and the later comedy, and joined buffoonery with delicacy. *Terence*, who was better inſtructed, received comedy from *Menander*, and ſurpaſſed his original, as he endeavoured to copy it. And laſtly, *Moliere* produced a new ſpecies of comedy, which muſt be placed in a claſs by itſelf, in oppoſition to that of *Ariſtophanes*, whoſe manner is likewiſe peculiar to himſelf.

But ſuch is the weakneſs of the human mind, that when we review the ſucceſſions of the drama a third time, we find genius falling from its height, forgetting itſelf, and led aſtray by the love of novelty, and the deſire of ſtriking out new paths. Tragedy degenerated in *Greece* from the time of *Ariſtotle*, and in *Rome* after *Auguſtus*. At *Rome* and *Athens* comedy produced *Mimi*, pantomimes, burlettas, tricks, and farces, for the ſake

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of variety; ſuch is the character, and ſuch the madneſs of the mind of man. It is ſatisfied with having made great conqueſts, and gives them up to attempt others, which are far from anſwering its expectation, and only enables it to diſcover its own folly, weakneſs, and deviations. But why ſhould we be tired with ſtanding ſtill at the true point of perfection, when it is attained? If eloquence be wearied, and forgets herſelf a while, yet ſhe ſoon returns to her former point: ſo will it happen to our theatres if the *French* Muſes will keep the *Greek* models in their view, and not look with diſdain upon a ſtage whoſe mother is nature, whoſe ſoul is paſſion, and whoſe art is ſimplicity: a ſtage, which, to ſpeak the truth, does not perhaps equal ours in ſplendor and elevation, but which excels it in ſimplicity and propriety, and equals it at leaſt in the conduct and direction of thoſe paſſions which may properly affect an honeſt man and a chriſtian.

For my part, I ſhall think myſelf well recompenſed for my labour, and ſhall attain the end which I had in view, if I ſhall in ſome little meaſure revive in the minds of thoſe who purpoſe to run the round of polite literature, not an immoderate and blind reverence, but a true taſte of antiquity: ſuch a taſte as both feeds and poliſhes the mind, and enriches it by enabling it to appropriate the wealth of foreigners, and to exert its natural fertility in exquiſite productions; ſuch a taſte as gave the *Racines*, the *Molieres*, the *Boileaus*, the *Fontaines*, the *Patrus*, the *Peleſſons*, and many other great geniuſes of the laſt age, all that they were, and all that they will always be; ſuch a taſte as puts the ſeal of immortality to thoſe works in which it is diſcovered; a taſte ſo neceſſary, that without it we may be certain that

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the greateſt powers of nature will long continue in a ſtate below themſelves; for no man ought to allow himſelf to be flattered or ſeduced by the example of ſome men of genius, who have rather appeared to deſpiſe this taſte than to deſpiſe it in reality. It is true that excellent originals have given occaſion, without any fault of their own, to very bad copies. No man ought ſeverely to ape either the ancients or the moderns: but if it was neceſſary to run into an extreme of one ſide or the other, which is never done by a judicious and well-directed mind, it would be better for a wit, as for a painter, to enrich himſelf by what he can take from the ancients, than to grow poor by taking all from his own ſtock; or openly to affect an imitation of thoſe moderns whoſe more fertile genius has produced beauties peculiar to themſelves, and which themſelves only can diſplay with grace: beauties of that peculiar kind, that they are not fit to be imitated by others; though in thoſe who firſt invented them they may be juſtly eſteemed, and in them only.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

TRAGEDY

OF

MACBETH:

WITH

REMARKS

On SIR THOMAS HANMER'S Edition of SHAKESPEARE.

First printed in the Year MDCCXLV.

"—As to all thoſe things which have been publiſhed under the
"titles of *Eſſays*, *Remarks*, *Obſervations*, &c. on *Shakeſpeare*, (if
"you except ſome critical notes on *Macbeth*, given as a ſpecimen
"of a projected edition, and written as appears by a man of parts
"and genius) the reſt are abſolutely below a ſerious notice."
Warburton's Preface to Shakeſpeare. E.

NOTE I.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter three Witches.

IN order to make a true eſtimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always neceſſary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet who ſhould now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the aſſiſtance of ſupernatural agents, would be cenſured as tranſgreſſing the bounds of probability, he would be baniſhed from the theatre to the nurſery, and condemned to write Fairy Tales inſtead of Tragedies; but a ſurvey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove that *Shakeſpeare* was in no danger of ſuch cenſures, ſince he only turned the ſyſtem that was then univerſally admitted to his advantage, and was far from overburthening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not ſtrictly the ſame, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in moſt by the learned themſelves.

Theſe phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkneſs of ignorance has been more groſs; but it cannot be ſhown, that the brighteſt gleams of knowledge have at any time been ſufficient to drive them out of the world. The time in which this kind of credulity was at its height, ſeems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Chriſtians imputed all their defeats to enchantment or diabolical oppoſition, as they aſcribed their ſucceſs to the aſſiſtance of their military ſaints; and the learned Mr. *Warburton* appears to believe (*Suppl. to the Introduction to Don* Quixote) that the firſt accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by thoſe *who* returned from their eaſtern expeditions. But there is always ſome diſtance between the birth and maturity of folly as of wickedneſs: this opinion had long exiſted, though perhaps the application of it had in no foregoing age been ſo frequent, nor the reception ſo general. *Olympiodorus*, in *Photius*'s Extracts, tells us of one *Libanius*, who practiſed this kind of military magick, and having promiſed χώρις ὁπλιτῶν κατὰ βαρβάρων ἐνεργεῖν, *to perform great things againſt the Barbarians without ſoldiers*, was, at the inſtances of the empreſs *Placidia*, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The empreſs ſhewed ſome kindneſs in her anger by cutting him off at a time ſo convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. *Chryſoſtom*'s book *de Sacerdotio*, which exhibits a ſcene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age; he ſuppoſes

a ſpectator, overlooking a field of battle, attended by one that points out all the various objects of horror, the engines of deſtruction, and the arts of ſlaughter. Δεικνύτο δὲ ἔτι παρὰ τοῖς ἐναντίοις καὶ πετομένους ἵππους διά τινος μαγγανείαι, καὶ ὁπλίτας δι' ἀέρος φερομένους, καὶ πάσης γοητείας δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν. *Let him then proceed to ſhow him in the oppoſite armies horſes flying by enchantment, armed men tranſported through the air, and every power and form of magick.* Whether St. *Chryſoſtom* believed that ſuch performances were really to be ſeen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his deſcription, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that ſuch notions were in his time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the *Saracens* in a later age; the wars with the *Saracens*, however, gave occaſion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally diſcovers prodigies, but as the ſcene of action was removed to a greater diſtance, and diſtance either of time or place is ſufficient to reconcile weak minds to wonderful relations.

The reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually encreaſing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft ſtill continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of Queen *Elizabeth* was the remarkable trial of the witches of *Warbois*, whoſe conviction is ſtill commemorated in an annual Sermon at *Huntingdon*. But in the reign of King *James*, in which this tragedy was written, many circumſtances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in *England*, not only examined in perſon a

woman

woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the *Scottish* dialect, and published at *Edinburgh*. This book was, soon after his accession, reprinted at *London*; and as the ready way to gain King *James*'s favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated, and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour, and it had a tendency to free cowardice from reproach. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of King *James*, made a law, by which it was enacted, *ch.* xii. That "if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. Or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. Or take up any dead man, woman, or child out of the grave,—or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. Or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 5. Whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body;

"6. That every ſuch perſon, being convicted, ſhall "ſuffer death."

Thus, in the time of *Shakeſpeare*, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once eſtabliſhed by law and by the faſhion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always ſeen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day diſcovered, and multiplied ſo faſt in ſome places, that biſhop *Hall* mentions a village in *Lancaſhire*, where their number was greater than that of the houſes. The Jeſuits and Sectaries took advantage of this univerſal error, and endeavoured to promote the intereſt of their parties by pretended cures of perſons afflicted by evil ſpirits, but they were detected and expoſed by the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church.

Upon this general infatuation *Shakeſpeare* might be eaſily allowed to found a play, eſpecially ſince he has followed with great exactneſs ſuch hiſtories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the ſcenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himſelf and his audience thought awful and affecting.

NOTE II.

SCENE II.

——THE mercileſs *Macdonel*,—from the Weſtern Iſles
Of *Kerns* and *Gallow-glaſſes* was ſupply'd,
And fortune on his damned *quarry* ſmiling;
Shew'd like a rebel's whore.

Kerns are light-armed, and *Gallow-glasses* heavy-armed soldiers. The word *quarry* has no sense that is properly applicable in this place, and therefore it is necessary to read,

And fortune on his damned quarrel *smiling.*

Quarrel was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*, and is to be found in that sense in *Hollingshead*'s account of the story of *Macbeth*, who, upon the creation of the prince of *Cumberland*, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* to endeavour after the crown. The sense therefore is *fortune smiling on his execrable cause*, &c.

NOTE III.

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they redoubled strokes upon the foe.

Mr. *Theobald* has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage by altering the punctuation thus:

——They
As cannons overcharg'd, with double cracks
So they redoubled strokes——

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of *a cannon charged with double cracks*; but

 surely

ſurely the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him ſay of a hero, that he *redoubles ſtrokes with double cracks*, an expreſſion not more loudly to be applauded, or more eaſily pardoned, than that which is rejected in its favour. That *a cannon is charged with thunder* or *with double thunders* may be written, not only without nonſenſe, but with elegance; and nothing elſe is here meant by *cracks*, which in the time of this writer was a word of ſuch emphaſis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general diſſolution of nature the *crack of doom*.

There are among Mr. *Theobald*'s alterations others which I do not approve, though I do not always cenſure them; for ſome of his amendments are ſo excellent, that, even when he has failed, he ought to be treated with indulgence and reſpect.

NOTE IV.

King. BUT who comes here?
Mal. The worthy *Thane* of *Roſſe*.
Lenox. What haſte looks through his eyes?
So ſhould he look, that *ſeems* to ſpeak things ſtrange.

The meaning of this paſſage as it now ſtands is, *ſo ſhould he look, that looks as if he told things ſtrange*. But *Roſſe* neither yet told ſtrange things, nor could look as if he told them; *Lenox* only conjectured from his air that he had ſtrange things to tell, and therefore undoubtedly ſaid

——What

——What haſte looks thro' his eyes?
So ſhould he look, that *teems* to ſpeak things ſtrange.

He looks like one that is big with ſomething of importance, a metaphor ſo natural, that it is every day uſed in common diſcourſe.

NOTE V.

SCENE III.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1ſt Witch. WHERE haſt thou been, ſiſter?
2d Witch. Killing ſwine.
3d Witch. Siſter, where thou?
1ſt Witch. A ſailor's wife had cheſnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht. Give me, quoth I.
(1) Aroint thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her huſband's to *Aleppo* gone, maſter o' th' *Tiger*:
But in a ſieve I'll thither ſail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—and I'll do.
2d Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
1ſt Witch. Thou art kind.
3d Witch. And I another.
1ſt Witch. I myſelf have all the other,
And the (2) very points they blow,
All the quarters that they know,
I' th' Ship-man's card———

I will

I will drain him dry as hay;
Sleep ſhall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-houſe lid;
He ſhall live a man (3) forbid;
Weary ſev'n-nights nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Tho' his bark cannot be loſt,
Yet it ſhall be tempeſt-toſt.
Look what I have.

2d Witch. Shew me, ſhew me.

(1) Aroint thee, witch,———

In one of the folio editions the reading is *anoint thee*, in a ſenſe very conſiſtent with the common accounts of witches, who are related to perform many ſupernatural acts by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the places where they meet at their helliſh feſtivals. In this ſenſe *anoint thee, witch*, will mean, *away, witch, to your infernal aſſembly*. This reading I was inclined to favour, becauſe I had met with the word *aroint* in no other place; till looking into *Hearne*'s Collections, I found it in a very old drawing, that he has publiſhed, in which St. *Patrick* is repreſented viſiting hell, and putting the devils into great confuſion by his preſence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label iſſuing out from his mouth with theſe words **out out arongt**, of which the laſt is evidently the ſame with *aroint*, and uſed in the ſame ſenſe as in this paſſage.

(2) And

(2) And the *very* points they blow.

As the word *very* is here of no other uſe than to fill up the verſe, it is likely that *Shakeſpeare* wrote *various*, which might be eaſily miſtaken for *very*, being either negligently read, haſtily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

(3) He ſhall live a man *forbid*.

Mr. *Theobald* has very juſtly explained *forbid* by *accurſed*, but without giving any reaſon of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray*, as in this *Saxon* fragment.

Ꝥe iꝩ ꝩiꝩ ꝥ biꞇ ⁊ boꞇe, &c.
He is wiſe that *prays* & improves.

As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit*, in oppoſition to the word *bid* in its preſent ſenſe, it ſignifies by the ſame kind of oppoſition to *curſe*, when it is derived from the ſame word in its primitive meaning.

NOTE VI.

SCENE V.

THE incongruity of all the paſſages in which the *Thane* of *Cawdor* is mentioned is very remarkable; in the ſecond ſcene the *Thanes* of *Roſſe* and *Angus* bring the king an account of the battle, and inform him that *Norway*

Aſſiſted

Aſſiſted by that moſt diſloyal traytor
The Thane of *Cawdor*, 'gan a diſmal conflict.

It appears that *Cawdor* was taken priſoner, for the king ſays in the ſame ſcene,

——Go, pronounce his death,
And with his former title greet *Macbeth.*

Yet though *Cawdor* was thus taken by *Macbeth*, in arms againſt his king, when *Macbeth* is ſaluted, in the fourth ſcene, *Thane of Cawdor*, by the Weird Siſters, he aſks,

How of *Cawdor?* the *Thane of Cawdor lives*,
A proſp'rous gentleman.——

And in the next line conſiders the promiſes, that he ſhould be *Cawdor* and *King*, as equally unlikely to be accompliſhed. How can *Macbeth* be ignorant of the ſtate of the Thane of *Cawdor*, whom he has juſt defeated and taken priſoner, or call him a *proſperous Gentleman* who has forfeited his title and life by open rebellion? Or why ſhould he wonder that the title of the rebel whom he has overthrown ſhould be conferred upon him? He cannot be ſuppoſed to diſſemble his knowledge of the condition of *Cawdor*, becauſe he enquires with all the ardour of curioſity, and the vehemence of ſudden aſtoniſhment; and becauſe nobody is preſent but *Banquo*, who had an equal part in the battle, and was equally acquainted with *Cawdor*'s treaſon. However, in the next ſcene, his ignorance ſtill continues; and, when *Roſſe* and *Angus*

Angus present him from the king with his new title, he cries out

——The *Thane* of *Cawdor* lives.
Why do you dreſs me in his borrowed robes?

Roſſe and *Angus*, who were the meſſengers that in the ſecond ſcene informed the king of the aſſiſtance given by *Cawdor* to the invader, having loſt, as well as *Macbeth*, all memory of what they had ſo lately ſeen and related, make this anſwer,

—— Whether he was
Combin'd with *Norway*, or did line the rebels
With hidden help and vantage, or with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not.

Neither *Roſſe* knew what he had juſt reported, nor *Macbeth* what he had juſt done. This ſeems not to be one of the faults that are to be imputed to the tranſcribers, ſince, though the inconſiſtency of *Roſſe* and *Angus* might be removed, by ſuppoſing that their names are erroneouſly inſerted, and that only *Roſſe* brought the account of the battle, and only *Angus* was ſent to compliment *Macbeth*, yet the forgetfulneſs of *Macbeth* cannot be palliated, ſince what he ſays could not have been ſpoken by any other.

NOTE VII.

THE thought, whoſe murder yet is but fantaſtical,
Shakes ſo my ſingle ſtate of man,——

The

The *single state of man* seems to be used by *Shakespeare* for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body* of men.

NOTE VIII.

Macbeth.—— Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

I suppose every reader is disgusted at the tautology in this passage, *time and the hour*, and will therefore willingly believe that *Shakespeare* wrote it thus,

—— Come what come may,
Time! on!—the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

Macbeth is deliberating upon the events which are to befal him; but finding no satisfaction from his own thoughts, he grows impatient of reflection, and resolves to wait the close without harassing himself with conjectures,

—— Come what come may.

But to shorten the pain of suspense, he calls upon time in the usual stile of ardent desire, to quicken his motion,

Time! on!——

He then comforts himself with the reflection that all his perplexity must have an end,

—— The hour runs thro' the roughest day.

This

This conjecture is supported by the passage in the letter to his lady, in which he says, *They referr'd me to the* coming on of time *with Hail King that shall be.*

NOTE IX.

SCENE VI.

Malcolm. —— NOTHING in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died,
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he *ow'd*,
As 'twere a careless trifle.

As the word *ow'd* affords here no sense but such as is forced and unnatural, it cannot be doubted that it was originally written, *The dearest thing he own'd*; a reading which needs neither defence nor explication.

NOTE X.

King.——THERE'S no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face.

The *construction of the mind* is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to *Shakespeare*; it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

NOTE XI.

Macbeth. THE ſervice, and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itſelf. Your highneſs' part
Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are to your throne and ſtate, children and ſervants,
Which do but what they ſhould, in doing *every thing*
Safe tow'rds your love and honour.

Of the laſt line of this ſpeech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Mr. *Warburton* and Mr. *Theobald* have admitted as the true reading.

—— Our duties
Are to your throne and ſtate, children and ſervants,
Which do but what they ſhould, in doing every thing
Fiefs to your love and honour.

My eſteem of theſe criticks, inclines me to believe, that they cannot be much pleaſed with the expreſſions *Fiefs to love*, or *Fiefs to honour*; and that they have propoſed this alteration rather becauſe no other occurred to them, than becauſe they approved it. I ſhall therefore propoſe a bolder change, perhaps with no better ſucceſs, but *ſua cuique placent*. I read thus,

—— Our duties
Are to your throne and ſtate, children and ſervants,
Which

Which do but what they ſhould, in doing *nothing*
Save tow'rds *your love and honour.*

We do but perform our duty when we contract all our views to your ſervice, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour.*

It is probable that this paſſage was firſt corrupted by writing *ſafe* for *ſave*, and the lines then ſtood thus,

——Doing nothing
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Which the next tranſcriber obſerving to be wrong, and yet not being able to diſcover the real fault, altered to the preſent reading.

NOTE XII.

SCENE VII.

——THOU'DST have, great *Glamis*,
That which cries, "thus thou muſt do if thou have *it*,
"And that," *&c.*

As the object of *Macbeth*'s deſire is here introduced ſpeaking of itſelf, it is neceſſary to read,

——— Thou'dſt have, great *Glamis*,
That which cries, "thus thou muſt do if thou have *me.*"

NOTE XIII.

——Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my ſpirits in thine ear,
And chaſtiſe with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
That fate and metaphyſical aid do *ſeem*
To have thee crown'd withal.

For *ſeem* the ſenſe evidently directs us to read *ſeek*. The crown to which fate deſtines thee, and which preternatural agents *endeavour* to beſtow upon thee. The *golden round* is the *diadem*.

NOTE XIV.

Lady Macbeth.——Come all you ſpirits
That tend on *mortal thoughts*, unſex me here,
And fill me from the crown to th' toe, top-full
Of direſt cruelty; make thick my blood,
Stop up th' acceſs and paſſage to remorſe,
That no compunctious viſitings of nature
Shake my fell purpoſe, nor *keep peace* between
Th' effect and it.

Mortal thoughts.

This expreſſion ſignifies not *the thoughts of mortals*, but, *murtherous*, *deadly*, or *deſtructive deſigns*. So in act 5th.

Hold faſt the *mortal* ſword.

And

And in another place,

With twenty *mortal* murthers.

—— Nor keep pace between
Th' effect and it.

The intent of Lady *Macbeth*, evidently is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect, but neither this nor indeed any other sense is expressed by the present reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that *Shakespeare* wrote differently, perhaps thus:

That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep pace* between
Th' effect and it.

To *keep pace between* may signify *to pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is on many occasions a favourite of *Shakespeare*. This phrase is indeed not usual in this sense, but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption?

NOTE XV.

SCENE VIII.

King. THIS castle hath a pleasant *seat*; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting Martlet, does approve,

By his lov'd manſionary, that heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,
Buttrice, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they moſt breed and haunt, I have obſerv'd
The air is delicate.

In this ſhort ſcene, I propoſe a ſlight alteration to be made, by ſubſtituting *ſite* for *ſeat*, as the ancient word for *ſituation*; and *ſenſe* for *ſenſes*, as more agreeable to the meaſure; for which reaſon likewiſe I have endeavoured to adjuſt this paſſage,

—— Heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,

By changing the punctuation and adding a ſyllable thus,

——— Heaven's breath
Smells wooingly. Here is no jutting frieze.

Thoſe who have peruſed books printed at the time of the firſt editions of *Shakeſpeare* know, that greater alterations than theſe are neceſſary almoſt in every page, even where it is not to be doubted that the copy was correct.

NOTE XVI.

SCENE X.

THE arguments by which Lady *Macbeth* perſuades her huſband to commit the murder, afford a proof of *Shakeſpeare*'s knowledge of human nature. She urges the

the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated ſometimes the houſebreaker, and ſometimes the conqueror: but this ſophiſm *Macbeth* has for ever deſtroyed by diſtinguiſhing true from falſe fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almoſt be ſaid, that they ought to beſtow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been loſt.

> I dare do all that may become a man,
> Who dares do more is none.

This topick, which has been always employed with too much ſucceſs, is uſed in this ſcene with peculiar propriety, to a ſoldier by a woman. Courage is the diſtinguiſhing virtue of a ſoldier, and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himſelf to murder *Duncan*, another art of ſophiſtry by which men have ſometimes deluded their conſciences, and perſuaded themſelves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them; this argument *Shakeſpeare*, whoſe plan obliged him to make *Macbeth* yield, has not confuted, though he might eaſily have ſhown that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter.

NOTE XVII.

LETTING *I dare not*, wait upon *I would*,
Like the poor cat i' th' adage.

The adage alluded to is, *The cat loves fish, but dares not wet her foot,*

Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.

NOTE XVIII.

WILL I with wine and wassel so convince.

To convince is in *Shakespeare* to *over-power* or *subdue*, as in this play,

——Their malady *convinces*
The great assay of art.

NOTE XIX.

——WHO shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell.*

Quell is *murder*, *manquellers* being in the old language the term for which *murderers* is now used.

NOTE XX.

ACT II. SCENE II.

——NOW o'er one half the world
(1) *Nature seems dead*, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale *Hecat*'s offerings: and wither'd murder,

(Alarum'd

(Alarum'd by his ſentinel, the wolf,
Whoſe howl 's his watch) thus with his ſtealthy pace,
With (2) *Tarquin's raviſhing ſides*, tow'rds his deſign
Moves like a ghoſt—Thou ſound and firm-ſet earth,
Hear not my ſteps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very ſtones prate of my where about,
And (3) *take the preſent horror from the time,*
That now ſuits with it.——

(1) ——Now o'er one half the world
Nature ſeems dead.

That is, *over our hemiſphere all action and motion ſeem to have ceaſed.* This image, which is perhaps the moſt ſtriking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by *Dryden* in his conqueſt of *Mexico*.

All things are huſh'd as nature's ſelf lay dead,
The mountains ſeem to nod their drowſy head;
The little birds in dreams their ſongs repeat,
And ſleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dews ſweat.
Even luſt and envy ſleep!

Theſe lines, though ſo well known, I have tranſcribed, that the contraſt between them and this paſſage of *Shakeſpeare* may be more accurately obſerved.

Night is deſcribed by two great poets, but one deſcribes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of *Dryden*, all the diſturbers of the world are laid aſleep; in that of *Shakeſpeare*, nothing but ſorcery, luſt, and murder is awake. He that reads *Dryden*, finds himſelf lulled with ſerenity, and diſpoſed to ſolitude and con-

 templation.

templation. He that peruses *Shakespeare*, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover, the other that of a murderer.

(2) ——— *Wither'd murder.*
———*Thus with his stealthy pace,*
With Tarquin's *ravishing sides tow'rd his design,*
Moves like a *ghost.*———

This was the reading of this passage in all the editions before that of Mr. *Pope*, who for *sides*, inserted in the text *strides*, which Mr. *Theobald* has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might perhaps have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as *moving like ghosts*, whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be, as *Milton* expresses it,

Smooth sliding without step.

This hemistick will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

——— And wither'd murder,
———Thus with his stealthy pace,
With *Tarquin* ravishing, slides tow'rd his design,
Moves like a ghost.

Tarquin

Tarquin is in this place the general name of a ravifher, and the fenfe is, Now is the time in which every one is a-fleep, but thofe who are employed in wickednefs, the witch who is facrificing to *Hecate*, and the ravifher and the murderer, who, like me, are ftealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjufted, he wifhes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the earth may not *hear his fteps*.

(3) And take the prefent horror from the time
That now fuits with it.

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful foliloquy is difappointed at the conclufion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is, at leaft, obfcure, nor can be explained into any fenfe worthy of the author. I fhall therefore propofe a flight alteration.

——Thou found and firm-fet earth,
Hear not my fteps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very ftones prate of my where-about,
And *talk*—the prefent horror of the time!——
That now fuits with it——

Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, difturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrors of the night; at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of fome fupernatural difcovery of his defign, and calls out to the ftones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk*.—As he is going to fay of what, he difcovers the abfurdity of his fufpicion

ſuſpicion and pauſes, but is again o'erwhelmed by his guilt, and concludes, that ſuch are the horrors of the preſent night, that the ſtones may be expected to cry out againſt him.

That now ſuits with it.

He obſerves in a ſubſequent paſſage, that on ſuch occaſions *ſtones have been known to move.* It is now a very juſt and ſtrong picture of a man about to commit a deliberate murder under the ſtrongeſt convictions of the wickedneſs of his deſign.

NOTE XXI.

SCENE IV.

Lenox. THE night has been unruly; where we lay
Our chimnies were blown down. And, as they ſay,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, ſtrange ſcreams of death,
And prophecying with accents terrible
Of dire combuſtions, and confuſed events,
New-hatch'd to the woful time.
The obſcure bird clamour'd the live-long night,
Some ſay the earth was fev'rous and did ſhake.

Theſe lines I think ſhould be rather regulated thus:

——Prophecying with accents terrible,
Of dire combuſtions and confuſed events.
New-hatch'd to th' woful time, the obſcure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night. Some ſay the earth was
fev'rous and did ſhake.

A *pro-*

A *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd*, ſeems to be *a prophecy* of an *event paſt*. The term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird*, and that birds of ill omen ſhould be *new-hatch'd to the woful time*, is very conſiſtent with the reſt of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the univerſal diſorder into which nature is deſcribed as thrown, by the perpetration of this horrid murder.

NOTE XXII.

——UP! Up! and ſee
The great doom's image *Malcolm*, *Banquo*,
As from your graves riſe up.——

The ſecond line might have been ſo eaſily completed, that it cannot be ſuppoſed to have been left imperfect by the author, who probably wrote,

——*Malcolm! Banquo!* riſe!
As from your graves riſe up.——

Many other emendations of the ſame kind might be made, without any greater deviation from the printed copies, than is found in each of them from the reſt.

NOTE XXIII.

Macbeth. ——HERE lay *Duncan*,
His ſilver ſkin laced with his golden blood,
And his gaſh'd ſtabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's waſteful entrance; there the murtherers
Steep'd

Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore:———

An *unmannerly dagger* and a *dagger breeched*, or as in ſome editions *breach'd with gore*, are expreſſions not eaſily to be underſtood, nor can it be imagined that *Shakeſpeare* would reproach the murderer of his king only with *want of manners*. There are undoubtedly two faults in this paſſage, which I have endeavoured to take away by reading,

——*Daggers*
Unmanly drench'd with gore.——
I ſaw drench'd *with the king's blood the fatal daggers, not only inſtruments of murder but evidences of cowardice.*

Each of theſe words might eaſily be confounded with that which I have ſubſtituted for it by a hand not exact, a caſual blot, or a negligent inſpection.

Mr. *Pope* has endeavoured to improve one of theſe lines, by ſubſtituting *goary blood* for *golden blood*, but it may eaſily be admitted, that he who could on ſuch an occaſion talk of *lacing the ſilver ſkin* would *lace it* with *golden blood*. No amendment can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that *Shakeſpeare* put theſe forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of *Macbeth*, as a mark of artifice and diſſimulation, to ſhow the difference between the ſtudied language of hypocriſy, and the natural outcries of ſudden paſſion. This whole ſpeech conſidered in this light, is a remarkable inſtance of judgment, as it conſiſts entirely of antitheſes and metaphors.

NOTE

NOTE XXIV.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Macbeth. ——OUR fears in *Banquo*
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear: and under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; (1) *as it is said*
Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings,
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For *Banquo*'s issue have I 'fil'd my mind,
For them the gracious *Duncan* have I murther'd,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the (2) common enemy of man,
To make them kings,—the seed of *Banquo* kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
(3) And champion me to th' utterance———

(1) —— As it is ſaid,
Anthony's was by *Cæſar*.

Though I would not often aſſume the critick's privilege, of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myſelf too far in departing from the eſtabliſhed reading; yet I cannot but propoſe the rejection of this paſſage, which I believe was an inſertion of ſome player, that having ſo much learning as to diſcover to what *Shakeſpeare* alluded, was not willing that his audience ſhould be leſs knowing than himſelf, and has therefore weakened the author's ſenſe by the intruſion of a remote and uſeleſs image into a ſpeech burſting from a man wholly poſſeſſed with his own preſent condition, and therefore not at leiſure to explain his own alluſions to himſelf. If theſe words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of *Shakeſpeare* cloſe together without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the ſiſters.

(2) —— The common enemy of man.

It is always an entertainment to an inquiſitive reader, to trace a ſentiment to its original ſource, and therefore, though the term *enemy of man* applied to the devil is in itſelf natural and obvious, yet ſome may be pleaſed with being informed, that *Shakeſpeare* probably borrowed it from the firſt lines of the Deſtruction of *Troy*, a book which he is known to have read.

That

That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of *Milton*, evidently copied from a book of no greater authority: in describing the gates of hell, book ii. v. 879. he says,

> ——— On a sudden open fly,
> With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
> Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
> Harsh thunder.

In the history of *Don Bellianis*, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of *Brandezar*, the gates are said to open *grating harsh thunder upon their brasen hinges.*

> (3) ——— Come fate into the lists,
> And champion me to th' utterance.——

This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un defi* a l'outrance. A challenge or a combat *a l'outrance, to extremity*, was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other*, in opposition to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense therefore is, *Let fate, that has fore-doom'd the exaltation of the sons of* Banquo, *enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity,*

ſity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger.

NOTE XXV.

Macbeth. AY, in the catalogue, ye go for men,
As hounds and grey-hounds, mungrels, ſpaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-ruggs, and demy-wolves are clept
All by the name of dogs.

Though this is not the moſt ſparkling paſſage in the play, and though the name of a dog is of no great importance, yet it may not be improper to remark, that there is no ſuch ſpecies of dogs as *ſhoughs* mentioned by *Caius de Canibus Britannicis*, or any other writer that has fallen into my hands, nor is the word to be found in any dictionary which I have examined. I therefore imagined that it is falſely printed for *ſlouths*, a kind of ſlow hound bred in the ſouthern parts of *England*, but was informed by a lady, that it is more probably uſed, either by miſtake, or according to the orthography of that time, for *ſhocks*.

NOTE XXVI.

Macbeth. —— IN this hour at moſt,
I will adviſe you where to plant yourſelves,
Acquaint you with the perfect ſpy o' th' time,
The moment on't, for't muſt be done to-night,
And ſomething from the palace:——

What

What is meant by *the ſpy of the time*, it will be found difficult to explain; and therefore ſenſe will be cheaply gained by a ſlight alteration.—*Macbeth* is aſſuring the aſſaſſins that they ſhall not want directions to find *Banquo*, and therefore ſays,

> *I will*———
> *Acquaint you with* a perfect ſpy *o' th' time.*

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well inſtructed*, or *well informed*, as in this play,

> Though in your ſtate of honour I am *perfect.*

Though I am well acquainted *with your quality and rank.*

NOTE XXVII.

SCENE IV.

> 2*d Murderer.* He needs not to miſtruſt, ſince he delivers
> Our offices and what we have to do,
> To the direction juſt.

Mr. *Theobald* has endeavoured unſucceſsfully to amend this paſſage, in which nothing is faulty but the punctuation. The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this. The *perfect ſpy*, mentioned by *Macbeth* in the

foregoing ſcene has, before they enter upon the ſtage, given them the directions which were promiſed at the time of their agreement; and therefore one of the murderers obſerves, that, ſince *he has given them ſuch exact information, he needs not doubt of their performance.* Then by way of exhortation to his aſſociates he cries out

——— To the direction juſt.

Now nothing remains but that we conform exactly to Macbeth'*s directions.*

NOTE XXVIII.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. YOU know your own degrees, ſit down:
At firſt and laſt the hearty welcome.

As this paſſage ſtands, not only the numbers are very imperfect, but the ſenſe, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading

——— Sit down at firſt,
And laſt a hearty welcome.

But for *laſt* ſhould then be written *next.* I believe the true reading is

You know your own degrees, ſit down.—To firſt
And laſt the hearty welcome.

All

All of whatever degree, from the higheſt to the loweſt, may be aſſured that their viſit is well received.

NOTE XXIX.

Macbeth. —— THERE's blood upon thy face.
[*To the murtherer aſide at the door.*
Murderer. 'Tis *Banquo*'s then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better *thee without, than he within.*

The ſenſe apparently requires that this paſſage ſhould be read thus:

'Tis better *thee* without, than *him* within.

That is, *I am more pleaſed that the blood of* Banquo *ſhould be on thy face, than in his body.*

NOTE XXX.

Lady Macbeth. PROPER ſtuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
[*Aſide to* Macbeth.
This is the air-drawn dagger which you ſaid
Led you to *Duncan.* Oh, theſe flaws and ſtarts,
Impoſtures to true fear, would well become
A woman's ſtory at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itſelf!
Why do you make ſuch faces? When all's done
You look but on a ſtool.

As *ſtarts* can neither with propriety nor ſenſe be called *impoſtures to true fear*, ſomething elſe was undoubtedly intended by the author, who perhaps wrote

——— Thoſe flaws and ſtarts,
Impoſtures true to fear, would well become
A woman's ſtory,———

Theſe ſymptoms of terror and amazement might better become *impoſtors true* only *to fear*, *might become a coward at the recital of ſuch falſhoods as no man could credit whoſe underſtanding was not weakened by his terrors*; *tales, told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam.*

NOTE XXXI.

Macbeth. ——LOVE and health to all!
Then I'll ſit down: give me ſome wine, fill full—
I drink to th' general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend *Banquo* whom we miſs,
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirſt,
And all to all.———

Though this paſſage is, as it now ſtands, capable of more meanings than one, none of them are very ſatiſfactory; and therefore I am inclined to read it thus:

—— To all, and him, we thirſt,
And hail to all.

Macbeth,

Macbeth, being about to ſalute his company with a bumper, declares that he includes *Banquo*, though abſent, in this act of kindneſs, and wiſhes *health* to all. *Hail* or *heil* for *health* was in ſuch continual uſe among the good-fellows of ancient times, that a drinker was called a *was-heiler*, or a *wiſher of health*, and the liquor was termed *was-heil*, becauſe *health* was ſo often *wiſhed* over it. Thus in the lines of *Hanvil* the Monk,

Jamque vagante ſcypho, diſcincto gutture was-heil
Ingeminant was-heil: *labor eſt plus perdere vini*
Quam ſitis. ———

Theſe words were afterwards corrupted into *waſſail* and *waſſailer*.

NOTE XXXII.

Macbeth. ——CAN ſuch things be,
And overcome us like a ſummer's cloud
Without our ſpecial wonder? You make me ſtrange
Even to the diſpoſition that I *owe*,
When now I think you can behold ſuch ſights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheek,
When mine is blanched with fear.

This paſſage, as it now ſtands, is unintelligible, but may be reſtored to ſenſe by a very ſlight alteration,

——— You make me ſtrange
Ev'n to the diſpoſition that I *know*.

Though I had before ſeen many inſtances of your courage, yet it now appears in a degree altogether new. *So that my* long acquaintance *with your* diſpoſition *does not hinder me from that aſtoniſhment which* novelty *produces.*

NOTE XXXIII.

IT will have blood, they ſay blood will have blood,
Stones have been known to move, and trees to ſpeak,
Augurs, that underſtood relations, have
By magpies, and by choughs, and rooks brought forth
The ſecret'ſt man of blood.——

In this paſſage the firſt line loſes much of its force by the preſent punctuation. *Macbeth* having conſidered the prodigy which has juſt appeared, infers juſtly from it, that the death of *Duncan* cannot paſs unpuniſhed,

It will have blood,——

Then after a ſhort pauſe, declares it as the general obſervation of mankind, that murderers cannot eſcape.

——*They ſay, blood will have blood.*

Murderers, when they have practiſed all human means of ſecurity, are detected by ſupernatural directions.

Augurs, that underſtand relations, *&c.*

By the word *relation* is underſtood the *connection* of effects with cauſes; to *underſtand relations* as *an augur* is to know how thoſe things *relate to* each other which have no viſible combination or dependence.

NOTE

NOTE XXXIV.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lenox *and another Lord.*

As this tragedy like the reſt of *Shakeſpeare*'s is perhaps overſtocked with perſonages, it is not eaſy to aſſign a reaſon, why a nameleſs character ſhould be introduced here, ſince nothing is ſaid that might not with equal propriety have been put into the mouth of any other diſaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy, it was written with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox* and *An.* for which the tranſcriber inſtead of *Lenox* and *Angus*, ſet down *Lenox* and *another Lord.* The author had indeed been more indebted to the tranſcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no errors of greater importance.

NOTE XXXV.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

As this is the chief ſcene of enchantment in the play, it is proper in this place to obſerve, with how much judgment *Shakeſpeare* has ſelected all the circumſtances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions.

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The uſual form in which familiar ſpirits are reported to converſe with witches, is that of a cat. A witch,

who was tried about half a century before the time of *Shakeſpeare*, had a cat named *Rutterkin*, as the ſpirit of one of thoſe witches was *Grimalkin*; and when any miſchief was to be done, ſhe uſed to bid *Rutterkin go and fly*; but once when ſhe would have ſent *Rutterkin* to torment a daughter of the counteſs of *Rutland*, inſtead of *going* or *flying*, he only cried *mew*, from which ſhe diſcovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not univerſal, but limited, as *Shakeſpeare* has taken care to inculcate.

> Though his bark cannot be loſt,
> Yet it ſhall be tempeſt toſt.

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced were melancholy, fits, and loſs of fleſh, which are threatened by one of *Shakeſpeare*'s witches.

> Weary ſev'nnights nine times nine
> Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was likewiſe their practice to deſtroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have to this day many ceremonies to ſecure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they ſeem to have been moſt ſuſpected of malice againſt ſwine. *Shakeſpeare* has accordingly made one of his witches declare that ſhe has been *killing ſwine*; and Dr. *Harſenet* obſerves, that about that time, *a ſow could not be ill of the meaſles, nor a girl of the ſullens, but ſome old woman was charged with witchcraft.*

> Toad, that under the cold ſtone
> Days and nights has forty-one

Swelter'd

Swelter'd venom ſleeping got,
Boil thou firſt i' th' charmed pot.

Toads have likewiſe long lain under the reproach of being by ſome means acceſſary to witchcraft, for which reaſon *Shakeſpeare*, in the firſt ſcene of this play, calls one of the ſpirits *padocke* or *toad*, and now takes care to put a toad firſt into the pot. When *Vaninus* was ſeized at *Thouloufe*, there was found at his lodgings *ingens bufo vitro incluſus*, *a great toad ſhut in a vial*, upon which thoſe that proſecuted him *veneficium exprobrabant*, *charged him*, I ſuppoſe, *with witchcraft*.

Fillet of a fenny ſnake
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of neut, and toe of frog;—
For a charm, *&c*.

The propriety of theſe ingredients may be known by conſulting the books *de Viribus Animalium* and *de Mirabilibus Mundi*, aſcribed to *Albertus Magnus*, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may diſcover very wonderful ſecrets.

Finger of birth-ſtrangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab;—

It has been already mentioned in the law againſt witches, that they are ſuppoſed to take up dead bodies to uſe in enchantments, which was confeſſed by the woman whom King *James* examined, and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their aſſemblies, two fingers for her ſhare. It is obſervable that *Shakeſpeare*,

ſpeare, on this great occaſion which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumſtances of horror. The babe whoſe finger is uſed, muſt be ſtrangled in its birth, the greaſe muſt not only be human, but muſt have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer, and even the ſow whoſe blood is uſed muſt have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. Theſe are touches of judgment and genius.

And now about the cauldron ſing——

Blue ſpirits and white,
Black ſpirits and grey
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may.

And in a former part,

Weird ſiſters hand in hand——
Thus do go about, about
Thrice to mine, and thrice to thine
And thrice again to make up nine.

Theſe two paſſages I have brought together, becauſe they both ſeem ſubject to the objection of too much levity for the ſolemnity of enchantment, and may both be ſhown, by one quotation from *Camden*'s account of *Ireland*, to be founded upon a practice really obſerved by the unciviliſed natives of that country. "When "any one gets a fall, *ſays the informer of* Camden, he "ſtarts up, and *turning three times to the right*, digs "a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a "ſpirit in the ground; and if he falls ſick in two or

6 "three

"three days, they ſend one of their women that is ſkilled "in that way to the place, where ſhe ſays, I call thee "from the eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, from the groves, "the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the *fairies*, "*red, black, white.*" There was likewiſe a book written before the time of *Shakeſpeare*, deſcribing, amongſt other properties, the *colours* of ſpirits.

Many other circumſtances might be particulariſed, in which *Shakeſpeare* has ſhewn his judgment and his knowledge.

NOTE XXXVI.

SCENE II.

Macbeth. THOU art too like the ſpirit of *Banquo*, down,
Thy crown does (1) ſear my eye-balls, and thy (2) *hair*,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the firſt,
A third is like the former.——

(1) The expreſſion of *Macbeth*, that the *crown ſears his* eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practiſed of deſtroying the ſight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning baſon before the eye, which dried up its humidity.

(2) As *Macbeth* expected to ſee a train of kings, and was only enquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be ſurpriſed that the *hair* of the ſecond was *bound with gold* like that of the firſt; he was offended only that the ſecond reſembled the firſt, as the firſt reſembled *Banquo*, and therefore ſaid,

——And

—— And thy *air*,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the firſt.

NOTE XXXVII.

I WILL—give to the edge o' th' ſword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate ſouls
That *trace him in his line*—no boaſting like a fool,
This deed I'll do before my purpoſe cool.

Both the ſenſe and meaſure of the third line, which, as it rhymes, ought, according to the practice of this author, to be regular, are at preſent injured by two ſuperfluous ſyllables, which may eaſily be removed by reading

—— ſouls,
That trace his line—no boaſting like a fool.

NOTE XXXVIII.

SCENE III.

Roſſe. DEAREST couſin,
I pray you ſchool yourſelf; but for your huſband,
He's noble, wiſe, judicious, and beſt knows
The fits o' th' time, I dare not ſpeak much farther,
But cruel are the times when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourſelves: when we (1) *hold rumour*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent ſea
Each way, and (2) *move.* I'll take my leave of you;

Shall

Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upwards
To what they were before: my pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you.

(1) ——— When we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

The present reading seems to afford no sense; and therefore some critical experiments may be properly tried upon it, though, the verses being without any connection, there is room for suspicion, that some intermediate lines are lost, and that the passage is therefore irretrievable. If it be supposed that the fault arises only from the corruption of some words, and that the traces of the true reading are still to be found, the passage may be changed thus:

—— When we *bode ruin*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

Or in a sense very applicable to the occasion of the conference,

—— When the *bold running*
From what they fear, yet know not what they fear.

(2) But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move.

That he who *floats* upon a *rough sea* must *move* is evident, too evident for *Shakespeare* so emphatically to assert. The line therefore is to be written thus:

Each way, and move—I'll take my leave of you.

Rosse

Rosse is about to proceed, but finding himself over-powered by his tenderness, breaks off abruptly, for which he makes a short apology and retires.

NOTE XXXIX.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. LET us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and like good men,
Bestride our *downfal birth-doom:* each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with *Scotland,* and yell'd out
Like syllables of dolour.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal birth-doom,* is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but those who are willing to confess that such counsel would to them be unintelligible, must endeavour to discover some reading less obscure. It is probable that *Shakespeare* wrote,

—— Like good men,
Bestride our *downfaln birthdom*——

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who, that he may defend it without encumbrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our

Our birthdom, or birthright, ſays he, lies on the ground, let us, like men who are to fight for what is deareſt to them, not abandon it, but ſtand over it and defend it. This is a ſtrong picture of obſtinate reſolution.

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the ſame analogy with *maſterdom* in this play, ſignifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *maſter*.

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother*; let us ſtand over our mother that lies bleeding on the ground.

NOTE XL.

Malcolm. Now we'll together, and the *chance of goodneſs*
Be like our warranted quarrel.

The *chance of goodneſs*, as it is commonly read, conveys no ſenſe. If there be not ſome more important error in the paſſage, it ſhould at leaſt be pointed thus:

—— And the chance, of goodneſs,
Be like our warranted quarrel.

That is, May the event be, of the goodneſs of heaven [*pro juſtitia divina*] anſwerable to the cauſe.

But I am inclined to believe that *Shakeſpeare* wrote,

—— And the chance, O goodneſs,
Be like our warranted quarrel.

This ſome of his tranſcribers wrote with a ſmall *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading, the ſenſe will be, *and O thou ſovereign goodneſs*, *to*

to whom we now appeal, may our fortune anſwer to our cauſe.

NOTE XLI.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Macbeth. BRING me no more reports, let them fly all,
'Till *Birnam* wood remove to *Dunſinane*,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy *Malcolm?*
Was he not born of woman?———
——Fly falſe *Thanes*,
And mingle with the *Engliſh* epicures.

In the firſt line of this ſpeech, the proper pauſes are not obſerved in the preſent editions.

Bring me no more reports—let them fly all—
Tell me not any more of deſertions—Let all my ſubjects leave me—I am ſafe till, &c.

The reproach of epicuriſm, on which Mr. *Theobald* has beſtowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, againſt thoſe who have more opportunities of luxury.

NOTE XLII.

Macbeth. I HAVE liv'd long enough: my *way* of life
Is fall'n into the ſear, the yellow leaf.

As

As there is no relation between the *way of life*, and *fallen into the ſear*, I am inclined to think, that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written, My *May* of life.

I am now paſſed from the ſpring to the autumn of my days, but I am without thoſe comforts that ſhould ſucceed the ſprightlineſs of bloom, and ſupport me in this melancholy ſeaſon.

NOTE XLIII.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. 'TIS his main hope:
For where there is *advantage to be given*,
Both more or leſs have given him the revolt;
And none ſerve with him but conſtrained things,
Whoſe hearts are abſent too.

The impropriety of the expreſſion *advantage to be given*, inſtead of *advantage given*, and the diſagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line, incline me to read,

——Where there is *a vantage* to be *gone*,
Both more and leſs have given him the revolt.

Advantage or *vantage* in the time of *Shakeſpeare* ſigfied *opportunity*.

More and leſs is the ſame with *greater and leſs*. So in the interpolated *Mandeville*, a book of that age, there is a chapter of *India the more and the leſs*.

NOTE XLIV.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. —— WHEREFORE was that cry?
Seyton. The queen is dead.
Macbeth. She ſhould (1) have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for ſuch a *word.*
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the laſt ſyllable of (2) recorded time;
And all our yeſterdays have lighted fools
The way to duſty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking ſhadow.———

She ſhould have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for ſuch a *word.*

This paſſage has very juſtly been ſuſpected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time*; and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word*, ſeems not a conſideration of importance ſufficient to tranſport *Macbeth* into the following exclamation. I read therefore,

(1) She ſhould have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for—ſuch a *world!* —
To-morrow, &c.

It is a broken ſpeech, in which only part of the thought is expreſſed, and may be paraphraſed thus:

The queen is dead. Macbeth. *Her death should have been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she lived longer,* there would at length have been a time for *the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the* world—*such is the condition of human life, that we always think* to-morrow *will be happier than to-day; but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were like me reckoning on to-morrow.*

(2) To the last syllable of recorded time.

Recorded time seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is indeed no accurate expression, but as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

NOTE XLV.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much——
I *pull* in resolution, and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,

That lies like truth. "Fear not till *Birnam* wood
Do come to *Dunſinane*," and now a wood
Comes toward *Dunſinane*.

I *pull* in reſolution ———

Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet as it is a phraſe without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is ſurely better to read

I *pall* in reſolution ———

I languiſh in my conſtancy, my confidence begins to forſake me. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to obſerve how eaſily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer, or miſtaken for it by an unſkilful printer.

NOTE XLVI.

SCENE VIII.

Seyward. HAD I as many ſons as I have hairs,
I would not wiſh them to a fairer death:
And ſo his knell is knoll'd.

This incident is thus related from *Henry* of *Huntingdon* by *Camden* in his *Remains*, from which our author probably copied it.

When *Seyward*, the martial Earl of *Northumberland*, underſtood that his ſon, whom he had ſent in ſervice againſt the *Scotchmen*, was ſlain, he demanded whether

whether his wound were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was anſwered in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wiſh I "any other death to me or mine."

AFTER the foregoing pages were printed, the late edition of *Shakeſpeare*, aſcribed to Sir *Thomas Hanmer*, fell into my hands; and it was therefore convenient for me to delay the publication of my remarks, till I had examined whether they were not anticipated by ſimilar obſervations, or precluded by better. I therefore read over this tragedy, but found that the editor's apprehenſion is of a caſt ſo different from mine, that he appears to find no difficulty in moſt of thoſe paſſages which I have repreſented as unintelligible, and has therefore paſſed ſmoothly over them, without any attempt to alter or explain them.

Some of the lines with which I had been perplexed, have been indeed ſo fortunate as to attract his regard; and it is not without all the ſatisfaction which it is uſual to expreſs on ſuch occaſions, that I find an entire agreement between us in ſubſtituting [ſee Note II.] *quarrel* for *quarry*, and in explaining the adage of the *cat*, [Note XVII.] But this pleaſure is, like moſt others, known only to be regretted; for I have the unhappineſs to find no ſuch conformity with regard to any other paſſage.

 The

The line which I have endeavoured to amend, Note XI. is likewiſe attempted by the new editor, and is perhaps the only paſſage in the play in which he has not ſubmiſſively admitted the emendations of foregoing critics. Inſtead of the common reading,

—— Doing every thing
Safe towards your love and honour,

he has publiſhed,

—— Doing every thing
Shap'd towards your love and honour.

This alteration, which, like all the reſt attempted by him, the reader is expected to admit, without any reaſon alledged in its defence, is, in my opinion, more plauſible than that of Mr. *Theobald*; whether it is right, I am not to determine.

In the paſſage which I have altered in Note XL. an emendation is likewiſe attempted in the late edition, where, for

— And the chance *of* goodneſs
Be like our warranted quarrel,

is ſubſtituted—And the chance *in* goodneſs—whether with more or leſs elegance, dignity, and propriety, than the reading which I have offered, I muſt again decline the province of deciding.

Moſt of the other emendations which he has endeavoured, whether with good or bad fortune, are too trivial to deſerve mention. For ſurely the weapons of criticiſm ought not to be blunted againſt an editor,

editor, who can imagine that he is reſtoring poetry, while he is amuſing himſelf with alterations like theſe;

For —— *This is the ſerjeant,*
Who like a good and hardy ſoldier fought;

—— This is the ſergeant, who
Like a *right* good and hardy ſoldier fought.

For —— Diſmay'd not this
Our captains *Macbeth* and *Banquo?*—Yes;

—— Diſmay'd not this
Our captains *brave Macbeth* and *Banquo?*—Yes.

Such harmleſs induſtry may, ſurely, be forgiven, if it cannot be praiſed: may he therefore never want a monoſyllable, who can uſe it with ſuch wonderful dexterity.

Rumpatur quiſquis rumpitur invidia!

The reſt of this edition I have not read, but, from the little that I have ſeen, think it not dangerous to declare that, in my opinion, its pomp recommends it more than its accuracy. There is no diſtinction made between the ancient reading and the innovations of the editor; there is no reaſon given for any of the alterations which are made; the emendations of former critics are adopted without any acknowledgment, and few of the difficulties are removed which have hitherto embarraſſed the readers of *Shakeſpeare.*

I would not, however, be thought to inſult the editor, nor to cenſure him with too much petulance, for having failed in little things, of whom I have been told, that he excels in greater. But I may, without indecency, obſerve, that no man ſhould attempt to teach others what he has never learned himſelf; and that thoſe who, like *Themiſtocles*, have ſtudied the arts of policy, and *can teach a ſmall ſtate how to grow great*, ſhould, like him, diſdain to labour in trifles, and conſider petty accompliſhments as below their ambition.

THE

ADVENTURER.

NUMB. 34. SATURDAY, *March* 3, 1753.

Has toties optata exegit gloria pœnas. JUV.

Such fate purſues the votaries of praiſe.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR, *Fleet-priſon, Feb.* 24.

TO a benevolent diſpoſition, every ſtate of life will afford ſome opportunities of contributing to the welfare of mankind. Opulence and ſplendor are enabled to diſpel the cloud of adverſity, to dry up the tears of the widow and the orphan, and to increaſe the felicity of all around them: their example will animate virtue, and retard the progreſs of vice. And even indigence and obſcurity, though without power to confer happineſs, may at leaſt prevent miſery, and apprize thoſe who are blinded by their paſſions that they are on the brink of irremediable calamity.

Pleaſed,

Pleased, therefore, with the thought of recovering others from that folly which has embittered my own days, I have presumed to address the *Adventurer* from the dreary mansions of wretchedness and despair, of which the gates are so wonderfully constructed, as to fly open for the reception of strangers, though they are impervious as a rock of adamant to such as are within them:

——*Facilis descensus Averni;*
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus hic labor est. VIRG.

The gates of hell are open night and day;
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way:
But to return and view the cheerful skies;
In this the task and mighty labour lies. DRYDEN.

Suffer me to acquaint you, Sir, that I have glittered at the ball, and sparkled in the circle; that I have had the happiness to be the unknown favourite of an unknown lady at the masquerade, have been the delight of tables of the first fashion, and the envy of my brother beaux; and to descend a little lower, it is, I believe, still remembered, that Messrs. *Velours* and *d'Espagne* stand indebted for a great part of their present influence at *Guildhall*, to the elegance of my shape, and the graceful freedom of my carriage.

——*Sed quæ præclara et prospera tanti,*
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum! JUV.

See the wild purchase of the bold and vain,
Where every bliss is bought with equal pain!

As

As I entered into the world very young, with an elegant perfon and a large eftate, it was not long before I difentangled myfelf from the fhackles of religion; for I was determined to the purfuit of pleafure, which according to my notions confifted in the unreftrained and unlimited gratifications of every paffion and every appetite; and as this could not be obtained under the frowns of a perpetual dictator, I confidered religion as my enemy; and proceeding to treat her with contempt and derifion, was not a little delighted, that the unfafhionablenefs of her appearance, and the unanimated uniformity of her motions, afforded frequent opportunities for the fallies of my imagination.

Conceiving now that I was fufficiently qualified to laugh away fcruples, I imparted my remarks to thofe among my female favourites, whofe virtue I intended to attack; for I was well affured, that pride would be able to make but a weak defence, when religion was fubverted; nor was my fuccefs below my expectation: the love of pleafure is too ftrongly implanted in the female breaft, to fuffer them fcrupuloufly to examine the validity of arguments defigned to weaken reftraint; all are eafily led to believe, that whatever thwarts their inclination muft be wrong: little more, therefore, was required, than by the addition of fome circumftances, and the exaggeration of others, to make merriment fupply the place of demonftration; nor was I fo fenfelefs as to offer arguments to fuch as could not attend to them, and with whom a repartee or catch would more effectually anfwer the fame purpofe. This being effected, there remained only "the

"dread

"dread of the world:" but *Roxana* ſoared too high, to think the opinion of others worthy her notice; *Lætitia* ſeemed to think of it only to declare, that "if all her hairs were worlds," ſhe ſhould reckon them "well loſt for love;" and *Paſtorella* fondly conceived, that ſhe could dwell for ever by the ſide of a bubbling fountain, content with her ſwain and fleecy care; without conſidering that ſtillneſs and ſolitude can afford ſatisfaction only to innocence.

It is not the deſire of new acquiſitions, but the glory of conqueſts, that fires the ſoldier's breaſt; as indeed the town is ſeldom worth much, when it has ſuffered the devaſtations of a ſiege; ſo that though I did not openly declare the effects of my own proweſs, which is forbidden by the laws of honour, it cannot be ſuppoſed that I was very ſolicitous to bury my reputation, or to hinder accidental diſcoveries. To have gained one victory, is an inducement to hazard a ſecond engagement: and though the ſucceſs of the general ſhould be a reaſon for increaſing the ſtrength of the fortification, it becomes, with many, a pretence for an immediate ſurrender, under the notion that no power is able to withſtand ſo formidable an adverſary; while others brave the danger, and think it mean to ſurrender, and daſtardly to fly. *Meliſſa*, indeed, knew better; and though ſhe could not boaſt the apathy, ſteadineſs, and inflexibility of a *Cato*, wanted not the more prudent virtue of *Scipio*, and gained the victory by declining the conteſt.

You muſt not, however, imagine, that I was, during this ſtate of abandoned libertiniſm, ſo fully convinced

convinced of the fitneſs of my own conduct, as to be free from uneaſineſs. I knew very well, that I might juſtly be deemed the peſt of ſociety, and that ſuch proceedings muſt terminate in the deſtruction of my health and fortune; but to admit thoughts of this kind was to live upon the rack: I fled, therefore, to the regions of mirth and jollity, as they are called, and endeavoured with burgundy, and a continual rotation of company, to free myſelf from the pangs of reflection. From theſe orgies we frequently ſallied forth in queſt of adventures, to the no ſmall terror and conſternation of all the ſober ſtragglers that came in our way: and though we never injured, like our illuſtrious progenitors, the *Mohocks*, either life or limbs; yet we have in the midſt of *Covent Garden* buried a taylor, who had been troubleſome to ſome of our fine gentlemen, beneath a heap of cabbage-leaves and ſtalks, with this conceit,

Satia te caule quem ſemper cupiſti.

Glut yourſelf with cabbage, of which you have always been greedy.

There can be no reaſon for mentioning the common exploits of breaking windows and bruiſing the watch; unleſs it be to tell you of the device of producing before the juſtice broken lanthorns, which have been paid for an hundred times: or their appearances with patches on their heads, under pretence of being cut by the ſword that was never drawn: nor need I ſay any thing of the more formidable attack of ſturdy chairmen, armed with poles; by a ſlight ſtroke of which, the pride of

Ned

Ned Revel's face was at once laid flat, and that effected in an inftant, which its moft mortal foe had for years affayed in vain. I fhall pafs over the accidents that attended attempts to fcale windows, and endeavours to diflodge figns from their hooks: there are many "hair-breadth 'fcapes," befides thofe in the "imminent deadly breach;" but the rake's life, though it be equally hazardous with that of the foldier, is neither accompanied with prefent honour nor with pleafing retrofpect; fuch is, and fuch ought to be the difference, between the enemy and the preferver of his country.

Amidft fuch giddy and thoughtlefs extravagance, it will not feem ftrange, that I was often the dupe of coarfe flattery. When Monf. *L'Allonge* affured me, that I thruft quart over arm better than any man in *England*, what could I lefs than prefent him with a fword that coft me thirty pieces? I was bound for a hundred pounds for *Tom Trippet*, becaufe he had declared that he would dance a minuet with any man in the three kingdoms except myfelf. But I often parted with money againft my inclination, either becaufe I wanted the refolution to refufe, or dreaded the appellation of a niggardly fellow; and I may be truly faid to have fquandered my eftate, without honour, without friends, and without pleafure. The laft may, perhaps, appear ftrange to men unacquainted with the mafquerade of life: I deceived others, and I endeavoured to deceive myfelf; and have worn the face of pleafantry and gaiety, while my heart fuffered the moft exquifite torture.

By the inftigation and encouragement of my friends, I became at length ambitious of a feat in parliament;

parliament; and accordingly ſet out for the town of *Wallop* in the weſt, where my arrival was welcomed by a thouſand throats, and I was in three days ſure of a majority: but after drinking out one hundred and fifty hogſheads of wine, and bribing two-thirds of the corporation twice over, I had the mortification to find, that the borough had been before ſold to Mr. *Courtly*.

In a life of this kind, my fortune, though conſiderable, was preſently diſſipated; and as the attraction grows more ſtrong the nearer any body approaches the earth, when once a man begins to ſink into poverty, he falls with velocity always increaſing; every ſupply is purchaſed at a higher and higher price, and every office of kindneſs obtained with greater and greater difficulty. Having now acquainted you with my ſtate of elevation, I ſhall, if you encourage the continuance of my correſpondence, ſhew you by what ſteps I deſcended from a firſt floor in *Pall-Mall* to my preſent habitation.

I am, SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

MYSARGYRUS.

NUMB. 41. TUESDAY, *March* 27, 1753.

——— Si mutabile pectus
Est tibi, consiliis, non curribus, utere nostris,
Dum potes, et solidis etiamnum sedibus adstas;
Dumque male optatos nondum premis inscius axes. OVID.

——— Th' attempt forsake,
And not my chariot but my counsel take;
While yet securely on the earth you stand;
Nor touch the horses with too rash a hand. ADDISON.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR, *Fleet, March* 24.

I NOW send you the sequel of my story; which had not been so long delayed, if I could have brought myself to imagine, that any real impatience was felt for the fate of *Misargyrus*; who has travelled no unbeaten track to misery, and consequently can present the reader only with such incidents as occur in daily life.

You have seen me, Sir, in the zenith of my glory; not dispensing the kindly warmth of an all-cheering sun, but, like another Phaeton, scorching and blasting every thing round me. I shall proceed, therefore, to finish my career, and pass as rapidly as possible through the remaining vicissitudes of my life.

When I first began to be in want of money, I made no doubt of an immediate supply. The news-papers

papers were perpetually offering directions to men, who ſeemed to have no other buſineſs than to gather heaps of gold for thoſe who place their ſupreme felicity in ſcattering it. I poſted away, therefore, to one of theſe advertiſers, who by his propoſals ſeemed to deal in thouſands; and was not a little chagrined to find, that this general benefactor would have nothing to do with any larger ſum than thirty pounds, nor would venture that without a joint note from myſelf and a reputable houſekeeper, or for a longer time than three months.

It was not yet ſo bad with me, as that I needed to ſolicit ſurety for thirty pounds: yet partly from the greedineſs that extravagance always produces, and partly from a deſire of ſeeing the humour of a petty uſurer, a character of which I had hitherto lived in ignorance, I condeſcended to liſten to his terms. He proceeded to inform me of my great felicity in not falling into the hands of an extortioner; and aſſured me, that I ſhould find him extremely moderate in his demands: he was not, indeed, certain, that he could furniſh me with the whole ſum, for people were at this particular time extremely preſſing and importunate for money; yet as I had the appearance of a gentleman, he would try what he could do, and give me his anſwer in three days.

At the expiration of the time, I called upon him again; and was again informed of the great demand for money, and that "money was money now:" he then adviſed me to be punctual in my payment, as that might induce him to befriend me hereafter; and delivered me the money, deducting at the rate of five

and thirty *per cent.* with another panegyrick upon his own moderation.

I will not tire you with the various practices of usurious oppression; but cannot omit my transaction with *Squeeze* on *Tower-hill*, who finding me a young man of considerable expectations, employed an agent to persuade me to borrow five hundred pounds, to be refunded by an annual payment of twenty *per cent.* during the joint lives of his daughter *Nancy Squeeze* and myself. The negociator came prepared to inforce his proposal with all his art; but finding that I caught his offer with the eagerness of necessity, he grew cold and languid: "he had mentioned it out of kindness; "he would try to serve me: Mr. *Squeeze* was an ho-"nest man, but extremely cautious." In three days he came to tell me, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, Mr. *Squeeze* having no good opinion of my life: but that there was one expedient remaining; Mrs. *Squeeze* could influence her husband, and her good-will might be gained by a compliment. I waited that afternoon on Mrs. *Squeeze*, and poured out before her the flatteries which usually gain access to rank and beauty: I did not then know, that there are places in which the only compliment is a bribe. Having yet credit with a jeweller, I afterwards procured a ring of thirty guineas, which I humbly presented, and was soon admitted to a treaty with Mr. *Squeeze*. He appeared peevish and backward, and my old friend whispered me, that he would never make a dry bargain: I, therefore, invited him to a tavern. Nine times we met on the affair; nine times I paid four pounds for the supper and claret; and nine guineas

guineas I gave the agent for good offices. I then obtained the money, paying ten *per cent.* advance; and at the tenth meeting gave another ſupper, and diſburſed fifteen pounds for the writings.

Others, who ſtiled themſelves brokers, would only truſt their money upon goods: that I might, therefore, try every art of expenſive folly, I took a houſe and furniſhed it. I amuſed myſelf with deſpoiling my moveables of their gloſſy appearance, for fear of alarming the lender with ſuſpicions; and in this I ſucceeded ſo well, that he favoured me with one hundred and ſixty pounds upon that which was rated at ſeven hundred. I then found that I was to maintain a guardian about me, to prevent the goods from being broken or removed. This was, indeed, an unexpected tax; but it was too late to recede; and I comforted myſelf, that I might prevent a creditor, of whom I had ſome apprehenſions, from ſeizing, by having a prior execution always in the houſe.

By ſuch means I had ſo embarraſſed myſelf, that my whole attention was engaged in contriving excuſes, and raiſing ſmall ſums to quiet ſuch as words would no longer mollify. It coſt me eighty pounds in preſents to Mr. *Leech* the attorney, for his forbearance of one hundred, which he ſolicited me to take when I had no need. I was perpetually haraſſed with importunate demands, and inſulted by wretches, who a few months before would not have dared to raiſe their eyes from the duſt before me. I lived in continual terror, frighted by every noiſe at the door, and terrified at the approach of every ſtep quicker than common. I never retired to reſt, without feeling the juſtneſs of the Spaniſh proverb, "Let him who ſleeps

"too much, borrow the pillow of a debtor;" my ſolicitude and vexation kept me long waking; and when I had cloſed my eyes, I was purſued or inſulted by viſionary bailiffs.

When I reflected upon the meanneſs of the ſhifts I had reduced myſelf to, I could not but curſe the folly and extravagance that had overwhelmed me in a ſea of troubles, from which it was highly improbable that I ſhould ever emerge. I had ſome time lived in hopes of an eſtate, at the death of my uncle; but he diſappointed me by marrying his houſekeeper; and, catching an opportunity ſoon after of quarrelling with me, for ſettling twenty pounds a year upon a girl whom I had ſeduced, told me that he would take care to prevent his fortune from being ſquandered upon proſtitutes.

Nothing now remained, but the chance of extricating myſelf by marriage; a ſcheme which, I flattered myſelf, nothing but my preſent diſtreſs would have made me think on with patience. I determined, therefore, to look out for a tender novice, with a large fortune at her own diſpoſal; and accordingly fixed my eyes upon Miſs *Biddy Simper*. I had now paid her ſix or ſeven viſits; and ſo fully convinced her of my being a gentleman and a rake, that I made no doubt that both her perſon and fortune would be ſoon mine.

At this critical time, Miſs *Gripe* called upon me, in a chariot bought with my money, and loaded with trinkets that I had in my days of affluence laviſhed on her. Thoſe days were now over; and there was little hope that they would ever return. She was not able to withſtand the temptation of ten pounds that *Talon* the bailiff offered her, but brought him into my

apartment

apartment difguifed in a livery; and taking my fword to the window, under pretence of admiring the workmanfhip, beckoned him to feize me.

Delay would have been expenfive without ufe, as the debt was too confiderable for payment or bail: I, therefore, fuffered myfelf to be immediately conducted to jail.

Veftibulum ante ipfum primifque in faucibus Orci,
Luctus & ultrices pofuêre cubilia curæ:
Pallentefque habitant morbi, triftifque fenectus,
Et metus, et malefuada fames, et turpis egeftas. VIRG.

Juft in the gate and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful cares and fullen forrows dwell;
And pale difeafes, and repining age;
Want, fear, and famine's unrefifted rage. DRYDEN.

Confinement of any kind is dreadful; a prifon is fometimes able to fhock thofe, who endure it in a good caufe: let your imagination, therefore, acquaint you, with what I have not words to exprefs, and conceive, if poffible, the horrors of imprifonment attended with reproach and ignominy, of involuntary affociation with the refufe of mankind, with wretches who were before too abandoned for fociety, but being now freed from fhame or fear, are hourly improving their vices by conforting with each other.

There are, however, a few, whom like myfelf imprifonment has rather mortified than hardened: with thefe only I converfe; and of thefe you may perhaps hereafter receive fome account from

Your humble fervant, MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 45. TUESDAY, *April* 10, 1753.

Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas
Impatiens consortis erit. LUCAN.

No faith of partnership dominion owns;
Still discord hovers o'er divided thrones.

IT is well known, that many things appear plausible in speculation, which can never be reduced to practice; and that of the numberless projects that have flattered mankind with theoretical speciousness, few have served any other purpose than to shew the ingenuity of their contrivers. A voyage to the moon, however romantick and absurd the scheme may now appear, since the properties of air have been better understood, seemed highly probable to many of the aspiring wits in the last century, who began to doat upon their glossy plumes, and fluttered with impatience for the hour of their departure:

——— *Pereant vestigia mille*
Ante fugam, absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum.

Hills, vales, and floods appear already crost;
And, ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost. POPE.

Among the fallacies which only experience can detect, there are some, of which scarcely experience itself can destroy the influence; some which, by a captivating shew of indubitable certainty, are perpetually gaining upon the human mind; and which, though every

every trial ends in diſappointment, obtain new credit as the ſenſe of miſcarriage wears gradually away, perſuade us to try again what we have tried already, and expoſe us by the ſame failure to double vexation.

Of this tempting, this deluſive kind, is the expectation of great performances by confederated ſtrength. The ſpeculatiſt, when he has carefully obſerved how much may be performed by a ſingle hand, calculates by a very eaſy operation the force of thouſands, and goes on accumulating power till reſiſtance vaniſhes before it; then rejoices in the ſucceſs of his new ſcheme, and wonders at the folly or idleneſs of former ages, who have lived in want of what might ſo readily be procured, and ſuffered themſelves to be debarred from happineſs by obſtacles which one united effort would have ſo eaſily ſurmounted.

But this gigantick phantom of collective power vaniſhes at once into air and emptineſs, at the firſt attempt to put it into action. The different apprehenſions, the diſcordant paſſions, the jarring intereſts of men, will ſcarcely permit that many ſhould unite in one undertaking.

Of a great and complicated deſign, ſome will never be brought to diſcern the end; and of the ſeveral means by which it may be accompliſhed, the choice will be a perpetual ſubject of debate, as every man is ſwayed in his determination by his own knowledge or convenience. In a long ſeries of action, ſome will languiſh with fatigue, and ſome be drawn off by preſent gratifications; ſome will loiter becauſe others labour, and ſome will ceaſe to labour becauſe others loiter: and if once they come within proſpect of ſucceſs and profit, ſome will be greedy and others envi-

ous; ſome will undertake more than they can perform, to enlarge their claims of advantage; ſome will perform leſs than they undertake, leſt their labours ſhould chiefly turn to the benefit of others.

The hiſtory of mankind informs us that a ſingle power is very ſeldom broken by a confederacy. States of different intereſts, and aſpects malevolent to each other, may be united for a time by common diſtreſs; and in the ardour of ſelf-preſervation fall unanimouſly upon an enemy, by whom they are all equally endangered. But if their firſt attack can be withſtood, time will never fail to diſſolve their union: ſucceſs and miſcarriage will be equally deſtructive: after the conqueſt of a province, they will quarrel in the diviſion; after the loſs of a battle, all will be endeavouring to ſecure themſelves by abandoning the reſt.

From the impoſſibility of confining numbers to the conſtant and uniform proſecution of a common intereſt, ariſes the difficulty of ſecuring ſubjects againſt the encroachment of governors. Power is always gradually ſtealing away from the many to the few, becauſe the few are more vigilant and conſiſtent; it ſtill contracts to a ſmaller number, till in time it centers in a ſingle perſon.

Thus all the forms of government inſtituted among mankind, perpetually tend towards monarchy; and power, however diffuſed through the whole community, is by negligence or corruption, commotion or diſtreſs, repoſed at laſt in the chief magiſtrate.

"There never appear," ſays *Swift*, "more than "five or ſix men of genius in an age; but if they "were united, the world could not ſtand before "them."

"them." It is happy, therefore, for mankind, that of this union there is no probability. As men take in a wider compaſs of intellectual ſurvey, they are more likely to chuſe different objects of purſuit; as they ſee more ways to the ſame end, they will be leſs eaſily perſuaded to travel together; as each is better qualified to form an independent ſcheme of private greatneſs, he will reject with greater obſtinacy the project of another; as each is more able to diſtinguiſh himſelf as the head of a party, he will leſs readily be made a follower or an aſſociate.

The reigning philoſophy informs us, that the vaſt bodies which conſtitute the univerſe, are regulated in their progreſs through the etherial ſpaces, by the perpetual agency of contrary forces; by one of which they are reſtrained from deſerting their orbits, and loſing themſelves in the immenſity of heaven; and held off by the other from ruſhing together, and cluſtering round their center with everlaſting coheſion.

The ſame contrariety of impulſe may be perhaps diſcovered in the motions of men: we are formed for ſociety, not for combination; we are equally unqualified to live in a cloſe connection with our fellow-beings, and in total ſeparation from them; we are attracted towards each other by general ſympathy, but kept back from contact by private intereſts.

Some philoſophers have been fooliſh enough to imagine, that improvements might be made in the ſyſtem of the univerſe, by a different arrangement of the orbs of heaven; and politicians, equally ignorant and equally preſumptuous, may eaſily be led to ſuppoſe, that the happineſs of our world would be promoted

promoted by a different tendency of the human mind. It appears, indeed, to a ſlight and ſuperficial obſerver, that many things impracticable in our preſent ſtate, might be eaſily effected, if mankind were better diſpoſed to union and co-operation: but a little reflection will diſcover, that if confederacies were eaſily formed, they would loſe their efficacy, ſince numbers would be oppoſed to numbers, and unanimity to unanimity; and inſtead of the preſent petty competitions of individuals or ſingle families, multitudes would be ſupplanting multitudes, and thouſands plotting againſt thouſands.

There is no claſs of the human ſpecies, of which the union ſeems to have been more expected, than of the learned: the reſt of the world have almoſt always agreed to ſhut ſcholars up together in colleges and cloiſters; ſurely not without hope, that they would look for that happineſs in concord, which they were debarred from finding in variety; and that ſuch conjunctions of intellect would recompenſe the munificence of founders and patrons, by performances above the reach of any ſingle mind.

But diſcord, who found means to roll her apple into the banqueting chamber of the goddeſſes, has had the addreſs to ſcatter her laurels in the ſeminaries of learning. The friendſhip of ſtudents and of beauties is for the moſt part equally ſincere, and equally durable: as both depend for happineſs on the regard of others, on that of which the value ariſes merely from compariſon, they are both expoſed to perpetual jealouſies, and both inceſſantly employed in ſchemes to intercept the praiſes of each other.

I am,

I am, however, far from intending to inculcate, that this confinement of the ſtudious to ſtudious companions, has been wholly without advantage to the publick: neighbourhood, where it does not conciliate friendſhip, incites competition; and he that would contentedly reſt in a lower degree of excellence, where he had no rival to dread, will be urged by his impatience of inferiority to inceſſant endeavours after great attainments.

Theſe ſtimulations of honeſt rivalry are, perhaps, the chief effects of academies and ſocieties; for whatever be the bulk of their joint labours, every ſingle piece is always the production of an individual, that owes nothing to his colleagues but the contagion of diligence, a reſolution to write, becauſe the reſt are writing, and the ſcorn of obſcurity while the reſt are illuſtrious.

NUMB. 50. SATURDAY, *April* 28, 1753.

Quicunque turpi fraude ſemel innotuit,
Etiamſi vera dici, amittit fidem. PHÆD.

The wretch that often has deceiv'd,
Though truth he ſpeaks, is ne'er believ'd.

WHEN *Ariſtotle* was once aſked, what a man could gain by uttering falſehoods; he replied, "Not to be credited when he ſhall tell the "truth."

The character of a liar is at once ſo hateful and contemptible, that even of thoſe who have loſt their virtue it might be expected, that from the violation of truth they ſhould be reſtrained by their pride. Almoſt every other vice that diſgraces human nature, may be kept in countenance by applauſe and aſſociation: the corrupter of virgin innocence ſees himſelf envied by the men, and at leaſt not deteſted by the women: the drunkard may eaſily unite with beings, devoted like himſelf to noiſy merriments or ſilent inſenſibility, who will celebrate his victories over the novices of intemperance, boaſt themſelves the companions of his prowefs, and tell with rapture of the multitudes whom unſucceſsful emulation has hurried to the grave: even the robber and the cutthroat have their followers, who admire their addreſs and intrepidity, their ſtratagems of rapine, and their fidelity to the gang.

The

The liar, and only the liar, is invariably and universally despised, abandoned, and disowned: he has no domestick consolations, which he can oppose to the censure of mankind; he can retire to no fraternity, where his crimes may stand in the place of virtues; but is given up to the hisses of the multitude, without friend and without apologist. It is the peculiar condition of falsehood, to be equally detested by the good and bad: "The devils," says Sir *Thomas Brown*, "do not tell lies to one another; for truth is "necessary to all societies: nor can the society of hell "subsist without it."

It is natural to expect, that a crime thus generally detested should be generally avoided; at least, that none should expose himself to unabated and unpitied infamy, without an adequate temptation; and that to guilt so easily detected, and so severely punished, an adequate temptation would not readily be found.

Yet so it is, that in defiance of censure and contempt, truth is frequently violated; and scarcely the most vigilant and unremitted circumspection will secure him that mixes with mankind, from being hourly deceived by men of whom it can scarcely be imagined, that they mean any injury to him or profit to themselves; even where the subject of conversation could not have been expected to put the passions in motion, or to have excited either hope or fear, or zeal or malignity, sufficient to induce any man to put his reputation in hazard, however little he might value it, or to overpower the love of truth, however weak might be its influence.

The casuists have very diligently distinguished lies into their several classes, according to their various

degrees of malignity: but they have, I think, generally omitted that which is moſt common, and, perhaps, not leaſt miſchievous; which, ſince the moraliſts have not given it a name, I ſhall diſtinguiſh as the *lie of vanity*.

To vanity may juſtly be imputed moſt of the falſehoods, which every man perceives hourly playing upon his ear, and, perhaps, moſt of thoſe that are propagated with ſucceſs. To the lie of commerce, and the lie of malice, the motive is ſo apparent, that they are ſeldom negligently or implicitly received: ſuſpicion is always watchful over the practices of intereſt; and whatever the hope of gain, or deſire of miſchief, can prompt one man to aſſert, another is by reaſons equally cogent incited to refute. But vanity pleaſes herſelf with ſuch ſlight gratifications, and looks forward to pleaſure ſo remotely conſequential, that her practices raiſe no alarm, and her ſtratagems are not eaſily diſcovered.

Vanity is, indeed, often ſuffered to paſs unpurſued by ſuſpicion, becauſe he that would watch her motions, can never be at reſt: fraud and malice are bounded in their influence; ſome opportunity of time and place is neceſſary to their agency; but ſcarce any man is abſtracted one moment from his vanity; and he, to whom truth affords no gratifications, is generally inclined to ſeek them in falſehoods.

It is remarked by Sir *Kenelm Digby*, "that every "man has a deſire to appear ſuperior to others, "though it were only in having ſeen what they have "not ſeen." Such an accidental advantage, ſince it neither implies merit, nor confers dignity, one would

would think ſhould not be deſired ſo much as to be counterfeited: yet even this vanity, trifling as it is, produces innumerable narratives, all equally falſe; but more or leſs credible in proportion to the ſkill or confidence of the relater. How many may a man of diffuſive converſation count among his acquaintances, whoſe lives have been ſignalized by numberleſs eſcapes; who never croſs the river but in a ſtorm, or take a journey into the country without more adventures than befel the knights-errant of ancient times in pathleſs foreſts or enchanted caſtles! How many muſt he know, to whom portents and prodigies are of daily occurrence; and for whom nature is hourly working wonders inviſible to every other eye, only to ſupply them with ſubjects of converſation!

Others there are that amuſe themſelves with the diſſemination of falſehood, at greater hazard of detection and diſgrace; men marked out by ſome lucky planet for univerſal confidence and friendſhip, who have been conſulted in every difficulty, entruſted with every ſecret, and ſummoned to every tranſaction: it is the ſupreme felicity of theſe men, to ſtun all companies with noiſy information; to ſtill doubt, and overbear oppoſition, with certain knowledge or authentick intelligence. A liar of this kind, with a ſtrong memory or briſk imagination, is often the oracle of an obſcure club, and, till time diſcovers his impoſtures, dictates to his hearers with uncontrouled authority; for if a publick queſtion be ſtarted, he was preſent at the debate; if a new faſhion be mentioned, he was at court the firſt day of its appearance; if a new performance of literature draws the

attention of the publick, he has patronised the author, and seen his work in manuscript: if a criminal of eminence be condemned to die, he often predicted his fate, and endeavoured his reformation: and who that lives at a distance from the scene of action, will dare to contradict a man, who reports from his own eyes and ears, and to whom all persons and affairs are thus intimately known?

This kind of falsehood is generally successful for a time, because it is practised at first with timidity and caution: but the prosperity of the liar is of short duration; the reception of one story is always an incitement to the forgery of another less probable; and he goes on to triumph over tacit credulity, till pride or reason rises up against him, and his companions will no longer endure to see him wiser than themselves.

It is apparent, that the inventors of all these fictions intend some exaltation of themselves, and are led off by the pursuit of honour from their attendance upon truth: their narratives always imply some consequence in favour of their courage, their sagacity, or their activity, their familiarity with the learned, or their reception among the great; they are always bribed by the present pleasure of seeing themselves superior to those that surround them, and receiving the homage of silent attention and envious admiration.

But vanity is sometimes excited to fiction by less visible gratifications: the present age abounds with a race of liars who are content with the consciousness of falsehood, and whose pride is to deceive others without any gain or glory to themselves. Of this tribe it is the supreme pleasure to remark a lady in

the playhouſe or the park, and to publiſh, under the character of a man ſuddenly enamoured, an advertiſement in the news of the next day, containing a minute deſcription of her perſon and her dreſs. From this artifice, however, no other effect can be expected, than perturbations which the writer can never ſee, and conjectures of which he never can be informed: ſome miſchief, however, he hopes he has done; and to have done miſchief, is of ſome importance. He ſets his invention to work again, and produces a narrative of a robbery or a murder, with all the circumſtances of time and place accurately adjuſted. This is a jeſt of greater effect and longer duration: if he fixes his ſcene at a proper diſtance, he may for ſeveral days keep a wife in terror for her huſband, or a mother for her ſon; and pleaſe himſelf with reflecting, that by his abilities and addreſs ſome addition is made to the miſeries of life.

There is, I think, an ancient law of *Scotland*, by which *leaſing-making* was capitally puniſhed. I am, indeed, far from deſiring to increaſe in this kingdom the number of executions; yet I cannot but think, that they who deſtroy the confidence of ſociety, weaken the credit of intelligence, and interrupt the ſecurity of life; haraſs the delicate with ſhame, and perplex the timorous with alarms; might very properly be awakened to a ſenſe of their crimes, by denunciations of a whipping-poſt or pillory: ſince many are ſo inſenſible of right and wrong, that they have no ſtandard of action but the law; nor feel guilt, but as they dread puniſhment.

NUMB. 53. TUESDAY, *May* 8, 1753.

Quisque suos patimur Manes. VIRG.

Each has his lot, and bears the fate he drew.

SIR, *Fleet, May* 6.

IN consequence of my engagements, I address you once more from the habitations of misery. In this place, from which business and pleasure are equally excluded, and in which our only employment and diversion is to hear the narratives of each other, I might much sooner have gathered materials for a letter, had I not hoped to have been reminded of my promise; but since I find myself placed in the regions of oblivion, where I am no less neglected by you than by the rest of mankind, I resolved no longer to wait for solicitation, but stole early this evening from between gloomy sullenness and riotous merriment, to give you an account of part of my companions.

One of the most eminent members of our club is Mr. *Edward Scamper*, a man of whose name the Olympic heroes would not have been ashamed. *Ned* was born to a small estate, which he determined to improve; and therefore, as soon as he became of age, mortgaged part of his land to buy a mare and stallion, and bred horses for the course. He was at first very successful, and gained several of the king's plates, as he is now every day boasting, at the expence

pence of very little more than ten times their value. At laſt, however, he diſcovered, that victory brought him more honour than profit: reſolving, therefore, to be rich as well as illuſtrious, he repleniſhed his pockets by another mortgage, became on a ſudden a daring better, and reſolving not to truſt a jockey with his fortune, rode his horſe himſelf, diſtanced two of his competitors the firſt heat, and at laſt won the race, by forcing his horſe on a deſcent to full ſpeed at the hazard of his neck. His eſtate was thus repaired, and ſome friends that had no ſouls adviſed him to give over; but *Ned* now knew the way to riches, and therefore without caution increaſed his expences. From this hour he talked and dreamed of nothing but a horſe-race; and riſing ſoon to the ſummit of equeſtrian reputation, he was conſtantly expected on every courſe, divided all his time between lords and jockies, and, as the unexperienced regulated their betts by his example, gained a great deal of money by laying openly on one horſe and ſecretly on the other. *Ned* was now ſo ſure of growing rich, that he involved his eſtate in a third mortgage, borrowed money of all his friends, and riſqued his whole fortune upon *Bay-Lincoln*. He mounted with beating heart, ſtarted fair, and won the firſt heat; but in the ſecond, as he was puſhing againſt the foremoſt of his rivals, his girth broke, his ſhoulder was diſlocated, and before he was diſmiſſed by the ſurgeon, two bailiffs faſtened upon him, and he ſaw *Newmarket* no more. His daily amuſement for four years has been to blow the ſignal for ſtarting, to make imaginary matches, to repeat the pedigree of

Bay-Lincoln, and to form refolutions againft trufting another groom with the choice of his girth.

The next in feniority is Mr. *Timothy Snug*, a man of deep contrivance and impenetrable fecrecy. His father died with the reputation of more wealth than he poffeffed: *Tim*, therefore, entered the world with a reputed fortune of ten thoufand pounds. Of this he very well knew that eight thoufand was imaginary: but being a man of refined policy, and knowing how much honour is annexed to riches, he refolved never to detect his own poverty; but furnifhed his houfe with elegance, fcattered his money with profufion, encouraged every fcheme of coftly pleafure, fpoke of petty loffes with negligence, and on the day before an execution entered his doors, had proclaimed at a publick table his refolution to be jolted no longer in a hackney-coach.

Another of my companions is the magnanimous *Jack Scatter*, the fon of a country gentleman, who having no other care than to leave him rich, confidered that literature could not be had without expence; mafters would not teach for nothing; and when a book was bought and read, it would fell for little. *Jack* was, therefore, taught to read and write by the butler; and when this acquifition was made, was left to pafs his days in the kitchen and the ftable, where he heard no crime cenfured but covetoufnefs and diftruft of poor honeft fervants, and where all the praife was beftowed on good houfekeeping, and a free heart. At the death of his father, *Jack* fet himfelf to retrieve the honour of his family: he abandoned his cellar to the butler, ordered his groom to

provide

provide hay and corn at diſcretion, took his houſe-keeper's word for the expences of the kitchen, allowed all his ſervants to do their work by deputies, permitted his domeſticks to keep his houſe open to their relations and acquaintance, and in ten years was conveyed hither, without having purchaſed by the loſs of his patrimony either honour or pleaſure, or obtained any other gratification than that of having corrupted the neighbouring villagers by luxury and idleneſs.

Dick Serge was a draper in *Cornhill*, and paſſed eight years in proſperous diligence, without any care but to keep his books, or any ambition but to be in time an alderman: but then, by ſome unaccountable revolution in his underſtanding, he became enamoured of wit and humour, deſpiſed the converſation of pedlars and ſtockjobbers, and rambled every night to the regions of gaiety, in queſt of company ſuited to his taſte. The wits at firſt flocked about him for ſport, and afterwards for intereſt; ſome found their way into his books, and ſome into his pockets; the man of adventure was equipped from his ſhop for the purſuit of a fortune; and he had ſometimes the honour to have his ſecurity accepted when his friends were in diſtreſs. Elated with theſe aſſociations, he ſoon learned to neglect his ſhop; and having drawn his money out of the funds, to avoid the neceſſity of teizing men of honour for trifling debts, he has been forced at laſt to retire hither, till his friends can procure him a poſt at court.

Another that joins in the ſame meſs is *Bob Cornice*, whoſe life has been ſpent in fitting up a houſe.

About ten years ago *Bob* purchaſed the country habitation of a bankrupt: the mere ſhell of a building, *Bob* holds no great matter; the inſide is the teſt of elegance. Of this houſe he was no ſooner maſter than he ſummoned twenty workmen to his aſſiſtance, tore up the floors and laid them anew, ſtripped off the wainſcot, drew the windows from their frames, altered the diſpoſition of doors and fire-places, and caſt the whole fabrick into a new form: his next care was to have his ceilings painted, his pannels gilt, and his chimney-pieces carved: every thing was executed by the ableſt hands: *Bob*'s buſineſs was to follow the workmen with a microſcope, and call upon them to retouch their performances, and heighten excellence to perfection. The reputation of his houſe now brings round him a daily confluence of viſitants, and every one tells him of ſome elegance which he has hitherto overlooked, ſome convenience not yet procured, or ſome new mode in ornament or furniture. *Bob*, who had no wiſh but to be admired, nor any guide but the faſhion, thought every thing beautiful in proportion as it was new, and conſidered his work as unfiniſhed, while any obſerver could ſuggeſt an addition; ſome alteration was therefore every day made, without any other motive than the charms of novelty. A traveller at laſt ſuggeſted to him the convenience of a grotto: *Bob* immediately ordered the mount of his garden to be excavated; and having laid out a large ſum in ſhells and minerals, was buſy in regulating the diſpoſition of the colours and luſtres, when two gentlemen, who had aſked permiſſion to ſee his gardens, preſented him a writ, and led him off to leſs elegant apartments.

 I know

I know not, Sir, whether among this fraternity of ſorrow you will think any much to be pitied; nor indeed do many of them appear to ſolicit compaſſion, for they generally applaud their own conduct, and deſpiſe thoſe whom want of taſte or ſpirit ſuffers to grow rich. It were happy if the priſons of the kingdom were filled only with characters like theſe, men whom proſperity could not make uſeful, and whom ruin cannot make wiſe: but there are among us many who raiſe different ſenſations, many that owe their preſent miſery to the ſeductions of treachery, the ſtrokes of caſualty, or the tenderneſs of pity; many whoſe ſufferings diſgrace ſociety, and whoſe virtues would adorn it: of theſe, when familiarity ſhall have enabled me to recount their ſtories without horror, you may expect another narrative from,

S I R,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

MYSARGYRUS.

NUMB. 58. SATURDAY, *May* 25, 1753.

Damnant quod non intelligunt. CIC.

They condemn what they do not underſtand.

EURIPIDES, having preſented *Socrates* with the writings of *Heraclitus*, a philoſopher famed for involution and obſcurity, enquired afterwards his opinion of their merit. "What I underſtand," ſaid *Socrates*, "I find to be excellent; and, therefore, believe that to be of equal value which I cannot underſtand."

The reflection of every man who reads this paſſage will ſuggeſt to him the difference between the practice of *Socrates*, and that of modern criticks: *Socrates*, who had, by long obſervation upon himſelf and others, diſcovered the weakneſs of the ſtrongeſt, and the dimneſs of the moſt enlightened intellect, was afraid to decide haſtily in his own favour, or to conclude that an author had written without meaning, becauſe he could not immediately catch his ideas; he knew that the faults of books are often more juſtly imputable to the reader, who ſometimes wants attention, and ſometimes penetration; whoſe underſtanding is often obſtructed by prejudice, and often diſſipated by remiſſneſs; who comes ſometimes to a new ſtudy, unfurniſhed with knowledge previouſly neceſſary; and finds difficulties inſuperable,

able, for want of ardour ſufficient to encounter them.

Obſcurity and clearneſs are relative terms: to ſome readers ſcarce any book is eaſy, to others not many are difficult: and ſurely they, whom neither any exuberant praiſe beſtowed by others, nor any eminent conqueſts over ſtubborn problems, have entitled to exalt themſelves above the common orders of mankind, might condeſcend to imitate the candour of *Socrates*; and where they find inconteſtible proofs of ſuperior genius, be content to think that there is juſtneſs in the connection which they cannot trace, and cogency in the reaſoning which they cannot comprehend.

This diffidence is never more reaſonable, than in the peruſal of the authors of antiquity; of thoſe whoſe works have been the delight of ages, and tranſmitted as the great inheritance of mankind from one generation to another: ſurely, no man can, without the utmoſt arrogance, imagine that he brings any ſuperiority of underſtanding to the peruſal of theſe books which have been preſerved in the devaſtation of cities, and ſnatched up from the wreck of nations; which thoſe who fled before barbarians have been careful to carry off in the hurry of migration, and of which barbarians have repented the deſtruction. If in books thus made venerable by the uniform atteſtation of ſucceſſive ages, any paſſages ſhall appear unworthy of that praiſe which they have formerly received; let us not immediately determine, that they owed their reputation to dullneſs or bigotry; but ſuſpect at leaſt that our anceſtors had ſome reaſons for their opinions,

and

and that our ignorance of thoſe reaſons makes us differ from them.

It often happens that an author's reputation is endangered in ſucceeding times, by that which raiſed the loudeſt applauſe among his cotemporaries: nothing is read with greater pleaſure than alluſions to recent facts, reigning opinions, or preſent controverſies; but when facts are forgotten, and controverſies extinguiſhed, theſe favourite touches loſe all their graces; and the author in his deſcent to poſterity muſt be left to the mercy of chance, without any power of aſcertaining the memory of thoſe things, to which he owed his luckieſt thoughts and his kindeſt reception.

On ſuch occaſions, every reader ſhould remember the diffidence of *Socrates*, and repair by his candour the injuries of time; he ſhould impute the ſeeming defects of his author to ſome chaſm of intelligence, and ſuppoſe, that the ſenſe which is now weak was once forcible, and the expreſſion which is now dubious formerly determinate.

How much the mutilation of ancient hiſtory has taken away from the beauty of poetical performances, may be conjectured from the light which a lucky commentator ſometimes effuſes, by the recovery of an incident that had been long forgotten: thus, in the third book of *Horace*, *Juno*'s denunciations againſt thoſe that ſhould preſume to raiſe again the walls of *Troy*, could for many ages pleaſe only by ſplendid images and ſwelling language, of which no man diſcovered the uſe or propriety, till *Le Fevre*, by ſhewing on what occaſion the Ode was written, changed

wonder

wonder to rational delight. Many paſſages yet undoubtedly remain in the ſame author, which an exacter knowledge of the incidents of his time would clear from objections. Among theſe I have always numbered the following lines;

Aurum per medios ire ſatellites,
Et perrumpere amat ſaxa, potentius
Ictu fulmineo. Concidit Auguris
Argivi domus ob lucrum
Demerſa excidio. Diffidit urbium
Portas vir Macedo, et ſubruit æmulos
Reges muneribus. Munera navium
Sævos illaqueant duces.

Stronger than thunder's winged force,
All-powerful gold can ſpread its courſe,
Thro' watchful guards its paſſage make,
And loves thro' ſolid walls to break:
From gold the overwhelming woes,
That cruſh'd the Grecian augur roſe:
Philip with gold thro' cities broke,
And rival monarchs felt his yoke;
Captains of ſhips to gold are ſlaves,
Tho' fierce as their own winds and waves. FRANCIS.

The cloſe of this paſſage, by which every reader is now diſappointed and offended, was probably the delight of the *Roman* court: it cannot be imagined, that *Horace*, after having given to gold the force of thunder, and told of its power to ſtorm cities and to conquer kings, would have concluded his account of its efficacy with its influence over naval commanders, had he not alluded to ſome fact then current in the mouths of men, and therefore more intereſting for a time

time than the conquests of Philip. Of the like kind may be reckoned another stanza in the same book:

——— *Jussa coram non sine conscio*
Surgit marito, seu vocat institor
Seu navis Hispanæ magister
Dedecorum pretiosus emptor.

The conscious husband bids her rise,
When some rich factor courts her charms,
Who calls the wanton to his arms,
And, prodigal of wealth and fame,
Profusely buys the costly shame. FRANCIS.

He has little knowledge of *Horace* who imagines that the *factor*, or the *Spanish merchant*, are mentioned by chance: there was undoubtedly some popular story of an intrigue, which those names recalled to the memory of his reader.

The flame of his genius in other parts, though somewhat dimmed by time, is not totally eclipsed; his address and judgment yet appear, though much of the spirit and vigour of his sentiment is lost: this has happened to the twentieth Ode of the first book;

Vile potabis modicis Sabinum
Cantharis, Græcâ quod ego ipse testâ
Conditum levi; datus in theatro
Cùm tibi plausus,
Chare Mæcenas eques. Ut paterni
Fluminis ripæ, simul et jocosa
Redderet laudes tibi Vaticani
Montis imago.

A poet's

A poet's beverage humbly cheap,
(Should great Mæcenas be my gueſt)
The vintage of the Sabine grape,
But yet in ſober cups ſhall crown the feaſt:
'Twas rack'd into a Grecian caſk,
Its rougher juice to melt away;
I ſeal'd it too—a pleaſing taſk!
With annual joy to mark the glorious day,
When in applauſive ſhouts thy name
Spread from the theatre around,
Floating on thy own Tiber's ſtream,
And Echo, playful nymph, return'd the ſound.

FRANCIS.

We here eaſily remark the intertexture of a happy compliment with an humble invitation; but certainly are leſs delighted than thoſe, to whom the mention of the applauſe beſtowed upon Mæcenas, gave occaſion to recount the actions or words that produced it.

Two lines which have exerciſed the ingenuity of modern criticks, may, I think, be reconciled to the judgment, by an eaſy ſuppoſition: *Horace* thus addreſſes Agrippa;

Scriberis Vario fortis, et hoſtium
Victor, Mæonii carminis alite.

Varius, a *ſwan of Homer's wing*,
Shall brave Agrippa's conqueſts ſing.

That *Varius* ſhould be called "A bird of *Homeric* "ſong," appears ſo harſh to modern ears, that an emendation of the text has been propoſed: but ſurely the learning of the ancients had been long ago obliterated, had every man thought himſelf at liberty

liberty to corrupt the lines which he did not underſtand. If we imagine that *Varius* had been by any of his cotemporaries celebrated under the appellation of *Muſarum Ales*, the ſwan of the Muſes, the language of *Horace* becomes graceful and familiar; and that ſuch a compliment was at leaſt poſſible, we know from the transformation feigned by *Horace* of himſelf.

The moſt elegant compliment that was paid to *Addiſon*, is of this obſcure and periſhable kind;

When panting Virtue her laſt efforts made,
You brought your CLIO to the virgin's aid.

Theſe lines muſt pleaſe as long as they are underſtood; but can be underſtood only by thoſe that have obſerved *Addiſon*'s ſignatures in the *Spectator*.

The nicety of theſe minute alluſions I ſhall exemplify by another inſtance, which I take this occaſion to mention, becauſe, as I am told, the commentators have omitted it. *Tibullus* addreſſes *Cynthia* in this manner:

Te ſpectem, ſuprema mihi cùm venerit hora,
Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.

Before my cloſing eyes, dear *Cynthia* ſtand,
Held weakly by my fainting trembling hand.

To theſe lines *Ovid* thus refers in his elegy on the death of *Tibullus*:

Cynthia decedens, felicius, inquit, amata
Sum tibi; vixiſti dum tuus ignis eram,
Cui Nemeſis, quid, ait, tibi ſunt mea damna dolori?
Me tenuit moriens deficiente manu.

Bleſt

Bleſt was my reign, retiring Cynthia cry'd:
Not till he left my breaſt, Tibullus dy'd.
Forbear, ſaid Nemeſis, my loſs to moan,
The fainting trembling hand was mine alone.

The beauty of this paſſage, which conſiſts in the appropriation made by *Nemeſis* of the line originally directed to *Cynthia*, had been wholly imperceptible to ſucceeding ages, had chance, which has deſtroyed ſo many greater volumes, deprived us likewiſe of the poems of *Tibullus*.

NUMB. 62. SATURDAY, *June* 9, 1753.

O fortuna viris invida fortibus
Quam non æqua bonis præmia dividis. SENECA.

Capricious Fortune ever joys,
With partial hand to deal the prize,
To cruſh the brave and cheat the wiſe.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR, *Fleet, June* 6.

TO the account of ſuch of my companions as are impriſoned without being miſerable, or are miſerable without any claim to compaſſion; I promiſed to add the hiſtories of thoſe, whoſe virtue has made them unhappy, or whoſe misfortunes are a leaſt without a crime. That this catalogue ſhould be

be very numerous, neither you nor your readers ought to expect; "rari quippe boni;" the good "are few." Virtue is uncommon in all the classes of humanity; and I suppose it will scarcely be imagined more frequent in a prison than in other places.

Yet in these gloomy regions is to be found the tenderness, the generosity, the philanthrophy of *Serenus*, who might have lived in competence and ease, if he could have looked without emotion on the miseries of another. *Serenus* was one of those exalted minds, whom knowledge and sagacity could not make suspicious; who poured out his soul in boundless intimacy, and thought community of possessions the law of friendship. The friend of *Serenus* was arrested for debt, and after many endeavours to soften his creditor, sent his wife to solicit that assistance which never was refused. The tears and importunity of female distress were more than was necessary to move the heart of *Serenus*; he hasted immediately away, and conferring a long time with his friend, found him confident that if the present pressure was taken off, he should soon be able to re-establish his affairs. *Serenus*, accustomed to believe, and afraid to aggravate distress, did not attempt to detect the fallacies of hope, nor reflect that every man overwhelmed with calamity believes, that if that was removed he shall immediately be happy: he, therefore, with little hesitation offered himself as surety.

In the first raptures of escape all was joy, gratitude, and confidence; the friend of *Serenus* displayed his

his profpects, and counted over the fums of which he fhould infallibly be mafter before the day of payment. *Serenus* in a fhort time began to find his danger, but could not prevail with himfelf to repent of beneficence; and therefore fuffered himfelf ftill to be amufed with projects which he durft not confider, for fear of finding them impracticable. The debtor, after he had tried every method of raifing money which art or indigence could prompt, wanted either fidelity or refolution to furrender himfelf to prifon, and left *Serenus* to take his place.

Serenus has often propofed to the creditor, to pay him whatever he fhall appear to have loft by the flight of his friend; but however reafonable this propofal may be thought, avarice and brutality have been hitherto inexorable, and *Serenus* ftill continues to languifh in prifon.

In this place, however, where want makes almoft every man felfifh, or defperation gloomy, it is the good fortune of *Serenus* not to live without a friend: he paffes moft of his hours in the converfation of *Candidus*, a man whom the fame virtuous ductility has with fome difference of circumftances made equally unhappy. *Candidus*, when he was young, helplefs, and ignorant, found a patron that educated, protected, and fupported him: his patron being more vigilant for others than himfelf, left at his death an only fon, deftitute and friendlefs. *Candidus* was eager to repay the benefits he had received; and having maintained the youth for a few years at his own houfe, afterwards placed him with a merchant of eminence, and gave bonds to a great value as a fecurity for his conduct.

The young man, removed too early from the only eye of which he dreaded the obſervation, and deprived of the only inſtruction which he heard with reverence, ſoon learned to conſider virtue as reſtraint, and reſtraint as oppreſſion; and to look with a longing eye at every expence to which he could not reach, and every pleaſure which he could not partake: by degrees he deviated from his firſt regularity, and unhappily mingling among young men buſy in diſſipating the gains of their fathers induſtry, he forgot the precepts of *Candidus*, ſpent the evening in parties of pleaſure, and the morning in expedients to ſupport his riots. He was, however, dextrous and active in buſineſs; and his maſter, being ſecured againſt any conſequences of diſhoneſty, was very little ſolicitous to inſpect his manners, or to enquire how he paſſed thoſe hours, which were not immediately devoted to the buſineſs of his profeſſion: when he was informed of the young man's extravagance or debauchery, "Let his bondſman "look to that," ſaid he, "I have taken care of "myſelf."

Thus the unhappy ſpendthrift proceeded from folly to folly, and from vice to vice, with the connivance if not the encouragement of his maſter; till in the heat of a nocturnal revel he committed ſuch violences in the ſtreet as drew upon him a criminal proſecution. Guilty and unexperienced, he knew not what courſe to take; to confeſs his crime to *Candidus*, and ſolicit his interpoſition, was little leſs dreadful than to ſtand before the frown of a court of juſtice. Having, therefore, paſſed the day with anguiſh in his heart and diſtraction in his looks, he ſeized

ſeized at night a very large ſum of money in the compting-houſe, and ſetting out he knew not whither, was heard of no more.

The conſequence of his flight was the ruin of *Candidus*; ruin ſurely undeſerved and irreproachable, and ſuch as the laws of a juſt government ought either to prevent or repair: nothing is more inequitable than that one man ſhould ſuffer for the crimes of another, for crimes which he neither prompted nor permitted, which he could neither foreſee nor prevent. When we conſider the weakneſs of human reſolutions and the inconſiſtency of human conduct, it muſt appear abſurd that one man ſhall engage for another, that he will not change his opinions or alter his conduct.

It is, I think, worthy of conſideration, whether ſince no wager is binding without a poſſibility of loſs on each ſide, it is not equally reaſonable, that no contract ſhould be valid without reciprocal ſtipulations: but in this caſe, and others of the ſame kind, what is ſtipulated on his ſide to whom the bond is given? he takes advantage of the ſecurity, neglects his affairs, omits his duty, ſuffers timorous wickedneſs to grow daring by degrees, permits appetite to call for new gratifications, and, perhaps, ſecretly longs for the time in which he ſhall have power to ſeize the forfeiture: and if virtue or gratitude ſhould prove too ſtrong for temptation, and a young man perſiſt in honeſty, however inſtigated by his paſſions, what can ſecure him at laſt againſt a falſe accuſation? I for my part always ſhall ſuſpect, that he who can by ſuch methods ſecure his property, will go one ſtep farther to increaſe it: nor can I think that

man ſafely truſted with the means of miſchief, who, by his deſire to have them in his hands, gives an evident proof how much leſs he values his neighbour's happineſs than his own.

Another of our companions is *Lentulus*, a man whoſe dignity of birth was very ill ſupported by his fortune. As ſome of the firſt offices in the kingdom were filled by his relations, he was early invited to court, and encouraged by careſſes and promiſes to attendance and ſolicitation: a conſtant appearance in ſplendid company neceſſarily required magnificence of dreſs; and a frequent participation of faſhionable amuſements forced him into expence: but theſe meaſures were requiſite to his ſucceſs; ſince every body knows, that to be loſt to ſight is to be loſt to remembrance, and that he who deſires to fill a vacancy, muſt be always at hand, leſt ſome man of greater vigilance ſhould ſtep in before him.

By this courſe of life his little fortune was every day made leſs: but he received ſo many diſtinctions in publick, and was known to reſort ſo familiarly to the houſes of the great, that every man looked on his preferment as certain, and believed that its value would compenſate for its ſlowneſs: he, therefore, found no difficulty in obtaining credit for all that his rank or his vanity made neceſſary: and, as ready payment was not expected, the bills were proportionably enlarged, and the value of the hazard or delay were adjuſted ſolely by the equity of the creditor. At length death deprived *Lentulus* of one of his patrons, and a revolution in the miniſtry of another; ſo that all his proſpects vaniſhed at once, and thoſe that had before encouraged his expences, began to perceive

perceive that their money was in danger: there was now no other contention but who ſhould firſt ſeize upon his perſon, and, by forcing immediate payment, deliver him up naked to the vengeance of the reſt. In purſuance of this ſcheme, one of them invited him to a tavern, and procured him to be arreſted at the door; but *Lentulus*, inſtead of endeavouring ſecretly to pacify him by payment, gave notice to the reſt, and offered to divide amongſt them the remnant of his fortune: they feaſted ſix hours at his expence, to deliberate on his propoſal; and at laſt determined, that, as he could not offer more than five ſhillings in the pound, it would be more prudent to keep him in priſon, till he could procure from his relations the payment of his debts.

Lentulus is not the only man confined within theſe walls, on the ſame account: the like procedure, upon the like motives, is common among men whom yet the law allows to partake the uſe of fire and water with the compaſſionate and the juſt; who frequent the aſſemblies of commerce in open day, and talk with deteſtation and contempt of highwaymen or houſebreakers: but, ſurely, that man muſt be confeſſedly robbed, who is compelled, by whatever means, to pay the debts which he does not owe; nor can I look with equal hatred upon him, who, at the hazard of his life, holds out his piſtol and demands my purſe, as on him who plunders under ſhelter of the law, and by detaining my ſon or my friend in priſon, extorts from me the price of their liberty. No man can be more an enemy to ſociety than he, by whoſe machinations our virtues are

turned to our disadvantage; he is less destructive to mankind that plunders cowardice, than he that preys upon compassion.

I believe, Mr. *Adventurer*, you will readily confess, that though not one of these, if tried before a commercial judicature, can be wholly acquitted from imprudence or temerity; yet that, in the eye of all who can consider virtue as distinct from wealth, the fault of two of them, at least, is outweighed by the merit; and that of the third is so much extenuated by the circumstances of his life, as not to deserve a perpetual prison: yet must these, with multitudes equally blameless, languish in confinement, till malevolence shall relent, or the law be changed.

I am, SIR,

Your humble servant,

MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 69. TUESDAY, *July* 3, 1753.

Ferè libenter homines id quod volunt credunt. CÆSAR.

Men willingly believe what they wiſh to be true.

TULLY has long ago obſerved, that no man, however weakened by long life, is ſo conſcious of his own decrepitude, as not to imagine that he may yet hold his ſtation in the world for another year.

Of the truth of this remark every day furniſhes new confirmation: there is no time of life, in which men for the moſt part ſeem leſs to expect the ſtroke of death, than when every other eye ſees it impending; or are more buſy in providing for another year than when it is plain to all but themſelves, that at another year they cannot arrive. Though every funeral that paſſes before their eyes evinces the deceitfulneſs of ſuch expectations, ſince every man who is born to the grave thought himſelf equally certain of living at leaſt to the next year; the ſurvivor ſtill continues to flatter himſelf, and is never at a loſs for ſome reaſon why his life ſhould be protracted, and the voracity of death continued to be pacified with ſome other prey.

But this is only one of the innumerable artifices practiſed in the univerſal conſpiracy of mankind againſt themſelves: every age and every condition indulges ſome darling fallacy; every man amuſes

himſelf with projects which he knows to be improbable, and which, therefore, he reſolves to purſue without daring to examine them. Whatever any man ardently deſires, he very readily believes that he ſhall ſome time attain: he whoſe intemperance has overwhelmed him with diſeaſes, while he languiſhes in the ſpring, expects vigour and recovery from the ſummer ſun; and while he melts away in the ſummer, transfers his hopes to the froſts of winter: he that gazes upon elegance or pleaſure, which want of money hinders him from imitating or partaking, comforts himſelf that the time of diſtreſs will ſoon be at an end, and that every day brings him nearer to a ſtate of happineſs; though he knows it has paſſed not only without acquiſition of advantage, but perhaps without endeavours after it, in the formation of ſchemes that cannot be executed, and in the contemplation of proſpects which cannot be approached.

Such is the general dream in which we all ſlumber out our time: every man thinks the day coming, in which he ſhall be gratified with all his wiſhes, in which he ſhall leave all thoſe competitors behind, who are now rejoicing like himſelf in the expectation of victory; the day is always coming to the ſervile in which they ſhall be powerful, to the obſcure in which they ſhall be eminent, and to the deformed in which they ſhall be beautiful.

If any of my readers has looked with ſo little attention on the world about him, as to imagine this repreſentation exaggerated beyond probability, let him reflect a little upon his own life; let him conſider what were his hopes and proſpects ten years ago, and what

what additions he then expected to be made by ten years to his happiness: those years are now elapsed; have they made good the promise that was extorted from them, have they advanced his fortune, enlarged his knowledge, or reformed his conduct, to the degree that was once expected? I am afraid, every man that recollects his hopes, must confess his disappointment; and own that day has glided unprofitably after day, and that he is still at the same distance from the point of happiness.

With what consolations can those, who have thus miscarried in their chief design, elude the memory of their ill success? with what amusements can they pacify their discontent, after the loss of so large a portion of life? they can give themselves up again to the same delusions, they can form new schemes of airy gratifications, and fix another period of felicity; they can again resolve to trust the promise which they know will be broken, they can walk in a circle with their eyes shut, and persuade themselves to think that they go forward.

Of every great and complicated event, part depends upon causes out of our power, and part must be effected by vigour and perseverance. With regard to that which is stiled in common language the work of chance, men will always find reasons for confidence or distrust, according to their different tempers or inclinations; and he that has been long accustomed to please himself with possibilities of fortuitous happiness, will not easily or willingly be reclaimed from his mistake. But the effects of human industry and skill are more easily subjected to calculation: whatever can be completed in a year,

is diviſible into parts, of which each may be performed in the compaſs of a day; he, therefore, that has paſſed the day without attention to the taſk aſſigned him, may be certain that the lapſe of life has brought him no nearer to his object; for whatever idleneſs may expect from time, its produce will be only in proportion to the diligence with which it has been uſed. He that floats lazily down the ſtream, in purſuit of ſomething borne along by the ſame current, will find himſelf indeed move forward; but unleſs he lays his hand to the oar, and increaſes his ſpeed by his own labour, muſt be always at the ſame diſtance from that which he is following.

There have happened in every age ſome contingencies of unexpected and undeſerved ſucceſs, by which thoſe who are determined to believe whatever favours their inclinations, have been encouraged to delight themſelves with future advantages; they ſupport confidence by conſiderations, of which the only proper uſe is to chaſe away deſpair: it is equally abſurd to ſit down in idleneſs becauſe ſome have been enriched without labour, as to leap a precipice becauſe ſome have fallen and eſcaped with life, or to put to ſea in a ſtorm becauſe ſome have been driven from a wreck upon the coaſt to which they are bound.

We are all ready to confeſs, that belief ought to be proportioned to evidence or probability: let any man, therefore, compare the number of thoſe who have been thus favoured by fortune, and of thoſe who have failed of their expectations, and he will eaſily determine, with what juſtneſs he has regiſtered himſelf in the lucky catalogue.

But there is no need on theſe occaſions for deep enquiries or laborious calculations; there is a far eaſier method of diſtinguiſhing the hopes of folly from thoſe of reaſon, of finding the difference between proſpects that exiſt before the eyes, and thoſe that are only painted on a fond imagination. *Tom Drowſy* had accuſtomed himſelf to compute the profit of a darling project, till he had no longer any doubt of its ſucceſs; it was at laſt matured by cloſe conſideration, all the meaſures were accurately adjuſted, and he wanted only five hundred pounds to become maſter of a fortune that might be envied by a director of a trading company. *Tom* was generous and grateful, and was reſolved to recompence this ſmall aſſiſtance with an ample fortune: he, therefore, deliberated for a time, to whom amongſt his friends he ſhould declare his neceſſities; not that he ſuſpected a refuſal, but becauſe he could not ſuddenly determine which of them would make the beſt uſe of riches, and was, therefore, moſt worthy of his favour. At laſt his choice was ſettled; and knowing that in order to borrow he muſt ſhew the probability of re-payment, he prepared for a minute and copious explanation of his project. But here the golden dream was at an end: he ſoon diſcovered the impoſſibility of impoſing upon others the notions by which he had ſo long impoſed upon himſelf; which way ſoever he turned his thoughts, impoſſibility and abſurdity aroſe in oppoſition on every ſide; even credulity and prejudice were at laſt forced to give way, and he grew aſhamed of crediting himſelf what ſhame would not ſuffer him to communicate to another.

To this teſt let every man bring his imaginations, before they have been too long predominant in his mind. Whatever is true will bear to be related, whatever is rational will endure to be explained; but when we delight to brood in ſecret over future happineſs, and ſilently to employ our meditations upon ſchemes of which we are conſcious that the bare mention would expoſe us to deriſion and contempt; we ſhould then remember, that we are cheating ourſelves by voluntary deluſions; and giving up to the unreal mockeries of fancy, thoſe hours in which ſolid advantages might be attained by ſober thought and rational aſſiduity.

There is, indeed, ſo little certainty in human affairs, that the moſt cautious and ſevere examiner may be allowed to indulge ſome hopes which he cannot prove to be much favoured by probability; ſince after his utmoſt endeavours to aſcertain events, he muſt often leave the iſſue in the hands of chance. And ſo ſcanty is our preſent allowance of happineſs, that in many ſituations life could ſcarcely be ſupported, if hope were not allowed to relieve the preſent hour by pleaſures borrowed from futurity; and re-animate the languor of dejection to new efforts, by pointing to diſtant regions of felicity, which yet no reſolution or perſeverance ſhall ever reach.

But theſe, like all other cordials, though they may invigorate in a ſmall quantity, intoxicate in a greater; theſe pleaſures, like the reſt, are lawful only in certain circumſtances, and to certain degrees; they may be uſeful in a due ſubſerviency to nobler purpoſes, but become dangerous and deſtructive

when once they gain the aſcendant in the heart: to ſoothe the mind to tranquillity by hope, even when that hope is likely to deceive us, may be ſometimes uſeful; but to lull our faculties in a lethargy, is poor and deſpicable.

Vices and errors are differently modified, according to the ſtate of the minds to which they are incident; to indulge hope beyond the warrant of reaſon, is the failure alike of mean and elevated underſtandings; but its foundation and its effects are totally different: the man of high courage and great abilities is apt to place too much confidence in himſelf, and to expect from a vigorous exertion of his powers more than ſpirit or diligence can attain: between him and his wiſh he ſees obſtacles indeed, but he expects to overleap or break them; his miſtaken ardour hurries him forward; and though perhaps he miſſes his end, he nevertheleſs obtains ſome collateral good, and performs ſomething uſeful to mankind and honourable to himſelf.

The drone of timidity preſumes likewiſe to hope, but without ground and without conſequence; the bliſs with which he ſolaces his hours, he always expects from others, though very often he knows not from whom: he folds his arms about him, and ſits in expectation of ſome revolution in the ſtate that ſhall raiſe him to greatneſs, or ſome golden ſhower that ſhall load him with wealth; he dozes away the day in muſing upon the morrow; and at the end of life is rouzed from his dream only to diſcover that the time of action is paſt, and that he can now ſhew his wiſdom only by repentance.

Numb. 84. Saturday, *August* 25, 1753.

——— Tolle periculum,
Jam vaga prosiliet frænis natura remotis. Hor.

But take the danger and the shame away,
And vagrant nature bounds upon her prey. Francis.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR,

IT has been observed, I think, by Sir *William Temple*, and after him by almost every other writer, that *England* affords a greater variety of characters than the rest of the world. This is ascribed to the liberty prevailing amongst us, which gives every man the privilege of being wise or foolish his own way, and preserves him from the necessity of hypocrisy or the servility of imitation.

That the position itself is true, I am not completely satisfied. To be nearly acquainted with the people of different countries can happen to very few; and in life, as in every thing else beheld at a distance, there appears an even uniformity: the petty discriminations which diversify the natural character, are not discoverable but by a close inspection; we, therefore, find them most at home, because there we have most opportunities of remarking them. Much less am I convinced, that this peculiar diversification, if

if it be real, is the consequence of peculiar liberty; for where is the government to be found that superintends individuals with so much vigilance, as not to leave their private conduct without restraint? Can it enter into a reasonable mind to imagine, that men of every other nation are not equally masters of their own time or houses with ourselves, and equally at liberty to be parsimonious or profuse, frolick or sullen, abstinent or luxurious? Liberty is certainly necessary to the full play of predominant humours; but such liberty is to be found alike under the government of the many or the few, in monarchies or in commonwealths.

How readily the predominant passion snatches an interval of liberty, and how fast it expands itself when the weight of restraint is taken away, I had lately an opportunity to discover, as I took a journey into the country in a stage-coach; which, as every journey is a kind of adventure, may be very properly related to you, though I can display no such extraordinary assembly as *Cervantes* has collected at *Don Quixote*'s inn.

In a stage-coach the passengers are for the most part wholly unknown to one another, and without expectation of ever meeting again when their journey is at an end; one should therefore imagine, that it was of little importance to any of them, what conjectures the rest should form concerning him. Yet so it is, that as all think themselves secure from detection, all assume that character of which they are most desirous, and on no occasion is the general ambition of superiority more apparently indulged.

On the day of our departure, in the twilight of the morning, I aſcended the vehicle with three men and two women, my fellow-travellers. It was eaſy to obſerve the affected elevation of mien with which every one entered, and the ſupercilious civility with which they paid their compliments to each other. When the firſt ceremony was diſpatched, we ſat ſilent for a long time, all employed in collecting importance into our faces, and endeavouring to ſtrike reverence and ſubmiſſion into our companions.

It is always obſervable that ſilence propagates itſelf, and that the longer talk has been ſuſpended, the more difficult it is to find any thing to ſay. We began now to wiſh for converſation; but no one ſeemed inclined to deſcend from his dignity, or firſt propoſe a topick of diſcourſe. At laſt a corpulent gentleman, who had equipped himſelf for this expedition, with a ſcarlet ſurtout and a large hat with a broad lace, drew out his watch, looked on it in ſilence, and then held it dangling at his finger. This was, I ſuppoſe, underſtood by all the company as an invitation to aſk the time of the day, but nobody appeared to heed his overture; and his deſire to be talking ſo far overcame his reſentment, that he let us know of his own accord that it was paſt five, and that in two hours we ſhould be at breakfaſt.

His condeſcenſion was thrown away; we continued all obdurate; the ladies held up their heads; I amuſed myſelf with watching their behaviour; and of the other two, one ſeemed to employ himſelf in counting the trees as we drove by them, the

other

other drew his hat over his eyes and counterfeited a ſlumber. The man of benevolence, to ſhew that he was not depreſſed by our neglect, hummed a tune and beat time upon his ſnuff-box.

Thus univerſally diſpleaſed with one another, and not much delighted with ourſelves, we came at laſt to the little inn appointed for our repaſt; and all began at once to recompenſe themſelves for the conſtraint of ſilence, by innumerable queſtions and orders to the people that attended us. At laſt, what every one had called for was got, or declared impoſſible to be got at that time, and we were perſuaded to ſit round the ſame table; when the gentleman in the red ſurtout looked again upon his watch, told us that we had half an hour to ſpare, but he was ſorry to ſee ſo little merriment among us; that all fellow-travellers were for the time upon the level, and that it was always his way to make himſelf one of the company. "I remember," ſays he, "it was on juſt "ſuch a morning as this, that I and my Lord *Mumble* "and the Duke of *Tenterden* were out upon a ramble: "we called at a little houſe as it might be this; and "my landlady, I warrant you, not ſuſpecting to whom "ſhe was talking, was ſo jocular and facetious, and "made ſo many merry anſwers to our queſtions, that "we were all ready to burſt with laughter. At laſt "the good woman happening to overhear me whiſper "the duke and call him by his title, was ſo ſurpriſed "and confounded, that we could ſcarcely get a word "from her; and the duke never met me from that "day to this, but he talks of the little houſe, and "quarrels with me for terrifying the landlady."

He had ſcarcely time to congratulate himſelf on the veneration which this narrative muſt have procured him from the company, when one of the ladies having reached out for a plate on a diſtant part of the table, began to remark "the inconveniences of travelling, "and the difficulty which they who never ſat at home "without a great number of attendants found in per-"forming for themſelves ſuch offices as the road re-"quired; but that people of quality often travelled in "diſguiſe, and might be generally known from the "vulgar by their condeſcenſion to poor inn-keepers, "and the allowance which they made for any defect "in their entertainment; that for her part, while peo-"ple were civil and meant well, it was never her "cuſtom to find fault, for one was not to expect upon "a journey all that one enjoyed at one's own houſe."

A general emulation ſeemed now to be excited. One of the men, who had hitherto ſaid nothing, called for the laſt news-paper; and having peruſed it a while with deep penſiveneſs, "It is impoſſible," ſays he, "for any man to gueſs how to act with regard "to the ſtocks; laſt week it was the general opinion "that they would fall; and I ſold out twenty thouſand "pounds in order to a purchaſe: they have now riſen "unexpectedly; and I make no doubt but at my re-"turn to *London* I ſhall riſk thirty thouſand pounds "among them again."

A young man, who had hitherto diſtinguiſhed himſelf only by the vivacity of his looks, and a frequent diverſion of his eyes from one object to another, upon this cloſed his ſnuff-box, and told us, that "he had a "hundred times talked with the chancellor and the

"judges on the ſubject of the ſtocks; that for his "part he did not pretend to be well acquainted with "the principles on which they were eſtabliſhed, but "had always heard them reckoned pernicious to trade, "uncertain in their produce, and unſolid in their "foundation; and that he had been adviſed by three "judges, his moſt intimate friends, never to venture "his money in the funds, but to put it out upon "land-ſecurity, till he could light upon an eſtate in "his own country."

It might be expected, that upon theſe glimpſes of latent dignity, we ſhould all have began to look round us with veneration; and have behaved like the princes of romance, when the enchantment that diſguiſes them is diſſolved, and they diſcover the dignity of each other: yet it happened, that none of theſe hints made much impreſſion on the company; every one was apparently ſuſpected of endeavouring to impoſe falſe appearances upon the reſt; all continued their haughtineſs in hopes to enforce their claims; and all grew every hour more ſullen, becauſe they found their repreſentations of themſelves without effect.

Thus we travelled on four days with malevolence perpetually increaſing, and without any endeavour but to outvie each other in ſuperciliouſneſs and neglect; and when any two of us could ſeparate ourſelves for a moment, we vented our indignation at the ſaucineſs of the reſt.

At length the journey was at an end; and time and chance, that ſtrip off all diſguiſes, have diſcovered that the intimate of lords and dukes is a nobleman's butler, who has furniſhed a ſhop with the money he has ſaved; the man who deals ſo largely in the funds,

is a clerk of a broker in '*Change-alley*; the lady who ſo carefully concealed her quality, keeps a cook-ſhop behind the *Exchange*; and the young man, who is ſo happy in the friendſhip of the judges, engroſſes and tranſcribes for bread in a garret of the *Temple*. Of one of the women only I could make no diſadvantageous detection, becauſe ſhe had aſſumed no character, but accommodated herſelf to the ſcene before her, without any ſtruggle for diſtinction or ſuperiority.

I could not forbear to reflect on the folly of practiſing a fraud, which, as the event ſhewed, had been already practiſed too often to ſucceed, and by the ſucceſs of which no advantage could have been obtained; of aſſuming a character, which was to end with the day; and of claiming upon falſe pretences honours which muſt periſh with the breath that paid them.

But, Mr. *Adventurer*, let not thoſe who laugh at me and my companions, think this folly confined to a ſtage-coach. Every man in the journey of life takes the ſame advantage of the ignorance of his fellow-travellers, diſguiſes himſelf in counterfeited merit, and hears thoſe praiſes with complacency which his conſcience reproaches him for accepting. Every man deceives himſelf, while he thinks he is deceiving others; and forgets that the time is at hand when every illuſion ſhall ceaſe, when fictitious excellence ſhall be torn away, and *all* muſt be ſhown to *all* in their real eſtate.

I am, SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

VIATOR.

NUMB. 85. TUESDAY, *Auguſt* 28, 1753.

Qui cupit optatam curſu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer. HOR.

The youth, who hopes th' Olympick prize to gain,
All arts muſt try, and every toil ſuſtain. FRANCIS.

IT is obſerved by *Bacon*, that "reading makes a "full man, converſation a ready man, and writing "an exact man."

As *Bacon* attained to degrees of knowledge ſcarcely ever reached by any other man, the directions which he gives for ſtudy have certainly a juſt claim to our regard; for who can teach an art with ſo great authority, as he that has practiſed it with undiſputed ſucceſs?

Under the protection of ſo great a name, I ſhall, therefore, venture to inculcate to my ingenious contemporaries, the neceſſity of reading, the fitneſs of conſulting other underſtandings than their own, and of conſidering the ſentiments and opinions of thoſe who, however neglected in the preſent age, had in their own times, and many of them a long time afterwards, ſuch reputation for knowledge and acuteneſs, as will ſcarcely ever be attained by thoſe that deſpiſe them.

An opinion has of late been, I know not how, propagated among us, that libraries are filled only with uſeleſs lumber; that men of parts ſtand in need of no

assistance; and that to spend life in poring upon books, is only to imbibe prejudices, to obstruct and embarrass the powers of nature, to cultivate memory at the expence of judgment, and to bury reason under a chaos of indigested learning.

Such is the talk of many who think themselves wise, and of some who are thought wise by others; of whom part probably believe their own tenets, and part may be justly suspected of endeavouring to shelter their ignorance in multitudes, and of wishing to destroy that reputation which they have no hopes to share. It will, I believe, be found invariably true, that learning was never decried by any learned man; and what credit can be given to those, who venture to condemn that which they do not know?

If reason has the power ascribed to it by its advocates, if so much is to be discovered by attention and meditation, it is hard to believe, that so many millions, equally participating of the bounties of nature with ourselves, have been for ages upon ages meditating in vain: if the wits of the present time expect the regard of posterity, which will then inherit the reason which is now thought superior to instruction, surely they may allow themselves to be instructed by the reason of former generations. When, therefore, an author declares, that he has been able to learn nothing from the writings of his predecessors, and such a declaration has been lately made, nothing but a degree of arrogance unpardonable in the greatest human understanding, can hinder him from perceiving that he is raising prejudices against his own performance; for with what hopes of success can he attempt that in which greater

abilities

abilities have hitherto miſcarried? or with what peculiar force does he ſuppoſe himſelf invigorated, that difficulties hitherto invincible ſhould give way before him?

Of thoſe whom Providence has qualified to make any additions to human knowledge, the number is extremely ſmall; and what can be added by each ſingle mind, even of this ſuperior claſs, is very little: the greateſt part of mankind muſt owe all their knowledge, and all muſt owe far the larger part of it, to the information of others. To underſtand the works of celebrated authors, to comprehend their ſyſtems, and retain their reaſonings, is a taſk more than equal to common intellects; and he is by no means to be accounted uſeleſs or idle, who has ſtored his mind with acquired knowledge, and can detail it occaſionally to others who have leſs leiſure or weaker abilities.

Perſius has juſtly obſerved, that knowledge is nothing to him who is not known by others to poſſeſs it: to the ſcholar himſelf it is nothing with reſpect either to honour or advantage, for the world cannot reward thoſe qualities which are concealed from it; with reſpect to others it is nothing, becauſe it affords no help to ignorance or error.

It is with juſtice, therefore, that in an accompliſhed character, *Horace* unites juſt ſentiments with the power of expreſſing them; and he that has once accumulated learning, is next to conſider, how he ſhall moſt widely diffuſe and moſt agreeably impart it.

A ready man is made by converſation. He that buries himſelf among his manuſcripts "beſprent,"

as *Pope* expreſſes it, "with learned duſt," and wears out his days and nights in perpetual reſearch and ſolitary meditation, is too apt to loſe in his elocution what he adds to his wiſdom; and when he comes into the world, to appear overloaded with his own notions, like a man armed with weapons which he cannot wield. He has no facility of inculcating his ſpeculations, of adapting himſelf to the various degrees of intellect which the accidents of converſation will preſent; but will talk to moſt unintelligibly, and to all unpleaſantly.

I was once preſent at the lectures of a profound philoſopher, a man really ſkilled in the ſcience which he profeſſed, who having occaſion to explain the terms *opacum* and *pellucidum*, told us, after ſome heſitation, that *opacum* was, as one might ſay, *opake*, and that *pellucidum* ſignified *pellucid*. Such was the dexterity with which this learned reader facilitated to his auditors the intricacies of ſcience; and ſo true is it, that a man may know what he cannot teach.

Boerhaave complains, that the writers who have treated of chemiſtry before him, are uſeleſs to the greater part of ſtudents, becauſe they pre-ſuppoſe their readers to have ſuch degrees of ſkill as are not often to be found. Into the ſame error are all men apt to fall, who have familiarized any ſubject to themſelves in ſolitude: they diſcourſe, as if they thought every other man had been employed in the ſame inquiries; and expect that ſhort hints and obſcure alluſions will produce in others the ſame train of ideas which they excite in themſelves.

Nor is this the only inconvenience which the man of ſtudy ſuffers from a recluſe life. When he meets with an opinion that pleaſes him, he catches it up with eagerneſs; looks only after ſuch arguments as tend to his confirmation; or ſpares himſelf the trouble of diſcuſſion, and adopts it with very little proof; indulges it long without ſuſpicion, and in time unites it to the general body of his knowledge, and treaſures it up among inconteſtible truths: but when he comes into the world among men who, arguing upon diſſimilar principles, have been led to different concluſions, and being placed in various ſituations, view the ſame object on many ſides; he finds his darling poſition attacked, and himſelf in no condition to defend it: having thought always in one train, he is in the ſtate of a man who having fenced always with the ſame maſter, is perplexed and amazed by a new poſture of his antagoniſt; he is entangled in unexpected difficulties, he is haraſſed by ſudden objections, he is unprovided with ſolutions or replies, his ſurprize impedes his natural powers of reaſoning, his thoughts are ſcattered and confounded, and he gratifies the pride of airy petulance with an eaſy victory.

It is difficult to imagine, with what obſtinacy truths which one mind perceives almoſt by intuition, will be rejected by another; and how many artifices muſt be practiſed, to procure admiſſion for the moſt evident propoſitions into underſtandings frighted by their novelty, or hardened againſt them by accidental prejudice; it can ſcarcely be conceived, how frequently, in theſe extemporaneous controverſies, the dull will be ſubtle, and the acute abſurd; how often ſtupidity will elude the force of argument, by involving itſelf in its

its own gloom; and miſtaken ingenuity will weave artful fallacies, which reaſon can ſcarcely find means to diſentangle.

In theſe encounters the learning of the recluſe uſually fails him: nothing but long habit and frequent experiments can confer the power of changing a poſition into various forms, preſenting it in different points of view, connecting it with known and granted truths, fortifying it with intelligible arguments, and illuſtrating it by apt ſimilitudes; and he, therefore, that has collected his knowledge in ſolitude, muſt learn its application by mixing with mankind.

But while the various opportunities of converſation invite us to try every mode of argument, and every art of recommending our ſentiments, we are frequently betrayed to the uſe of ſuch as are not in themſelves ſtrictly defenſible: a man heated in talk, and eager of victory, takes advantage of the miſtakes or ignorance of his adverſary, lays hold of conceſſions to which he knows he has no right, and urges proofs likely to prevail in his opponent, though he knows himſelf that they have no force: thus the ſeverity of reaſon is relaxed, many topicks are accumulated, but without juſt arrangement or diſtinction; we learn to ſatisfy ourſelves with ſuch ratiocination as ſilences others; and ſeldom recal to a cloſe examination, that diſcourſe which has gratified our vanity with victory and applauſe.

Some caution, therefore, muſt be uſed leſt copiouſneſs and facility be made leſs valuable by inaccuracy and confuſion. To fix the thoughts by writing, and ſubject them to frequent examinations and reviews, is the beſt method of enabling the mind to detect its

own

own sophisms, and keep it on guard against the fallacies which it practises on others: in conversation we naturally diffuse our thoughts, and in writing we contract them; method is the excellence of writing, and unconstraint the grace of conversation.

To read, write, and converse in due proportions, is, therefore, the business of a man of letters. For all these there is not often equal opportunity; excellence, therefore, is not often attainable; and most men fail in one or other of the ends proposed, and are full without readiness, or ready without exactness. Some deficiency must be forgiven all, because all are men; and more must be allowed to pass uncensured in the greater part of the world, because none can confer upon himself abilities, and few have the choice of situations proper for the improvement of those which nature has bestowed: it is however, reasonable, to have *perfection* in our eye; that we may always advance towards it, though we know it never can be reached.

NUMB. 92. SATURDAY, *September* 22, 1753.

Cum tabulis animum cenſoris ſumet honeſti. HOR.

Bold be the critick, zealous to his truſt,
Like the firm judge inexorably juſt.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR,

IN the papers of criticiſm which you have given to the publick, I have remarked a ſpirit of candour and love of truth, equally remote from bigotry and captiouſneſs; a juſt diſtribution of praiſe amongſt the ancients and the moderns; a ſober deference to reputation long eſtabliſhed, without a blind adoration of antiquity; and a willingneſs to favour later performances, without a light or puerile fondneſs for novelty.

I ſhall, therefore, venture to lay before you, ſuch obſervations as have riſen to my mind in the conſideration of *Virgil*'s paſtorals, without any inquiry how far my ſentiments deviate from eſtabliſhed rules or common opinions.

If we ſurvey the ten paſtorals in a general view, it will be found that *Virgil* can derive from them very little claim to the praiſe of an inventor. To ſearch into the antiquity of this kind of poetry, is not my preſent purpoſe; that it has long ſubſiſted in the eaſt, the *Sacred Writings* ſufficiently inform us; and we

we may conjecture, with great probability, that it was sometimes the devotion, and sometimes the entertainment of the first generations of mankind. *Theocritus* united elegance with simplicity; and taught his shepherds to sing with so much ease and harmony, that his countrymen despairing to excel, forbore to imitate him; and the Greeks, however vain or ambitious, left him in quiet possession of the garlands which the wood-nymphs had bestowed upon him.

Virgil, however, taking advantage of another language, ventured to copy or to rival the *Sicilian bard*: he has written with greater splendor of diction, and elevation of sentiment: but as the magnificence of his performances was more, the simplicity was less; and, perhaps, where he excels *Theocritus*, he sometimes obtains his superiority by deviating from the pastoral character, and performing what *Theocritus* never attempted.

Yet, though I would willingly pay to *Theocritus* the honour which is always due to an original author, I am far from intending to depreciate *Virgil*; of whom *Horace* justly declares, that the rural muses have appropriated to him their elegance and sweetness, and who, as he copied *Theocritus* in his design, has resembled him likewise in his success; for, if we except *Calphurnius*, an obscure author of the lower ages, I know not that a single pastoral was written after him by any poet, till the revival of literature.

But though his general merit has been universally acknowledged, I am far from thinking all the productions of his rural *Thalia* equally excellent: there is,

is, indeed, in all his paſtorals a ſtrain of verſification which it is vain to ſeek in any other poet; but if we except the firſt and the tenth, they ſeem liable either wholly or in part to conſiderable objections.

The ſecond, though we ſhould forget the great charge againſt it, which I am afraid can never be refuted, might, I think, have periſhed, without any diminution of the praiſe of its author; for I know not that it contains one affecting ſentiment or pleaſing deſcription, or one paſſage that ſtrikes the imagination or awakens the paſſions.

The third contains a conteſt between two ſhepherds, begun with a quarrel of which ſome particulars might well be ſpared, carried on with ſprightlineſs and elegance, and terminated at laſt in a reconciliation: but, ſurely, whether the invectives with which they attack each other be true or falſe, they are too much degraded from the dignity of paſtoral innocence; and inſtead of rejoicing that they are both victorious, I ſhould not have grieved could they have been both defeated.

The poem to *Pollio* is, indeed, of another kind: it is filled with images at once ſplendid and pleaſing, and is elevated with grandeur of language worthy of the firſt of *Roman* poets; but I am not able to reconcile myſelf to the diſproportion, between the performance and the occaſion that produced it: that the golden age ſhould return becauſe *Pollio* had a ſon, appears ſo wild a fiction, that I am ready to ſuſpect the poet of having written, for ſome other purpoſe, what he took this opportunity of producing to the publick.

The

The fifth contains a celebration of *Daphnis*, which has ſtood to all ſucceeding ages as the model of paſtoral elegies. To deny praiſe to a performance which ſo many thouſands have laboured to imitate, would be to judge with too little deference for the opinion of mankind: yet whoever ſhall read it with impartiality, will find that moſt of the images are of the mythological kind, and, therefore, eaſily invented; and that there are few ſentiments of rational praiſe or natural lamentation.

In the *Silenus* he again riſes to the dignity of philoſophick ſentiments and heroick poetry. The addreſs to *Varus* is eminently beautiful: but ſince the compliment paid to *Gallus* fixes the tranſaction to his own time, the fiction of *Silenus* ſeems injudicious; nor has any ſufficient reaſon yet been found, to juſtify his choice of thoſe fables that make the ſubject of the ſong.

The ſeventh exhibits another conteſt of the tuneful ſhepherds: and, ſurely, it is not without ſome reproach to his inventive power, that of ten paſtorals *Virgil* has written two upon the ſame plan. One of the ſhepherds now gains an acknowledged victory, but without any apparent ſuperiority, and the reader, when he ſees the prize adjudged, is not able to diſcover how it was deſerved.

Of the eighth paſtoral, ſo little is properly the work of *Virgil*, that he has no claim to other praiſe or blame than that of a tranſlator.

Of the ninth, it is ſcarce poſſible to diſcover the deſign or tendency; it is ſaid, I know not upon what authority, to have been compoſed from frag-

ments

ments of other poems; and except a few lines in which the author touches upon his own misfortunes, there is nothing that ſeems appropriated to any time or place, or of which any other uſe can be diſcovered than to fill up the poem.

The firſt and the tenth paſtorals, whatever be determined of the reſt, are ſufficient to place their author above the reach of rivalry. The complaint of *Gallus* diſappointed in his love, is full of ſuch ſentiments as diſappointed love naturally produces; his wiſhes are wild, his reſentment is tender, and his purpoſes are inconſtant. In the genuine language of deſpair, he ſooths himſelf a-while with the pity that ſhall be paid him after his death:

——— Tamen cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,
Montibus hæc veſtris: ſoli cantare periti
Arcades. O mihi tum quam molliter oſſa quieſcant,
Veſtra meos olim ſi fiſtula dicat amores!

——— Yet, O Arcadian ſwains,
Ye beſt artificers of ſoothing ſtrains!
Tune your ſoft reeds, and teach your rocks my woes,
So ſhall my ſhade in ſweeter reſt repoſe.
O that your birth and buſineſs had been mine;
To feed the flock, and prune the ſpreading vine!

WARTON.

Diſcontented with his preſent condition, and deſirous to be any thing but what he is, he wiſhes himſelf one of the ſhepherds. He then catches the idea of rural tranquillity; but ſoon diſcovers how much happier he ſhould be in theſe happy regions, with *Lycoris* at his ſide:

Hic

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori:
Hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.
Nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis;
Tela inter media, atque adversos detinet hostes.
Tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere) tantum
Alpinas, ah dura, nives, & frigore Rheni
Me sine sola vides. Ah te ne frigora lædant!
Ah tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

Here cooling fountains roll thro' flow'ry meads,
Here woods, Lycoris, lift their verdant heads;
Here could I wear my careless life away,
And in thy arms insensibly decay.
Instead of that, me frantick love detains
'Mid foes, and dreadful darts, and bloody plains:
While you—and can my soul the tale believe,
Far from your country, lonely wand'ring leave
Me, me your lover, barbarous fugitive!
Seek the rough Alps where snows eternal shine,
And joyless borders of the frozen Rhine.
Ah! may no cold e'er blast my dearest maid,
Nor pointed ice thy tender feet invade! WARTON.

He then turns his thoughts on every side, in quest of something that may solace or amuse him: he proposes happiness to himself, first in one scene and then in another; and at last finds that nothing will satisfy:

Jam neque Hamadryades rursum, nec carmina nobis
Ipsa placent: ipsæ rursum concedite sylvæ,
Non illum nostri possunt mutare labores;
Nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus,
Scithoniasque nives hyemis subeamus aquosæ:
Nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,
Æthiopum versemus oves sub sidere Cancri,
Omnia vincit amor; et nos cedamus amori.

But now again no more the woodland maids,
Nor paſtoral ſongs delight—Farewell, ye ſhades—
No toils of ours the cruel god can change,
Tho' loſt in frozen deſerts we ſhould range;
Tho' we ſhould drink where chilling Hebrus flows,
Endure bleak winter blaſts, and Thracian ſnows;
Or on hot India's plains our flocks ſhould feed,
Where the parch'd elm declines his ſickening head;
Beneath fierce-glowing Cancer's fiery beams,
Far from cool breezes and refreſhing ſtreams.
Love over all maintains reſiſtleſs ſway,
And let us love's all-conquering power obey.

WARTON.

But notwithſtanding the excellence of the tenth paſtoral, I cannot forbear to give the preference to the firſt, which is equally natural and more diverſified. The complaint of the ſhepherd, who ſaw his old companion at eaſe in the ſhade, while himſelf was driving his little flock he knew not whither, is ſuch as, with variation of circumſtances, miſery always utters at the ſight of proſperity:

Nos patriæ fines, & dulcia linquimus arva;
Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra,
Formoſam reſonare doces Amaryllida ſylvas.

We leave our country's bounds, our much lov'd plains;
We from our country fly, unhappy ſwains!
You, Tit'rus, in the groves at leiſure laid,
Teach Amaryllis' name to every ſhade.

WARTON.

His account of the difficulties of his journey, gives a very tender image of paſtoral diſtreſs:

—— En

——— *En ipſe capellas*
Protenus æger ago: hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco:
Hic inter denſas corylos modo namque gemellos,
Spem gregis, ah! ſilice in nuda connixa reliquit.

And lo! ſad partner of the general care,
Weary and faint I drive my goats afar!
While ſcarcely this my leading hand ſuſtains,
Tir'd with the way, and recent from her pains;
For 'mid yon tangled hazels as we paſt,
On the bare flints her hapleſs twin ſhe caſt,
The hopes and promiſe of my ruin'd fold!

WARTON.

The deſcription of *Virgil*'s happineſs in his little farm, combines almoſt all the images of rural pleaſure; and he, therefore, that can read it with indifference, has no ſenſe of paſtoral poetry:

Fortunate ſenex, ergo tua rura manebunt,
Et tibi magna ſatis; quamvis lapis omnia nudus,
Limoſoque palus obducat paſcua junco,
Non inſueta gravis tentabunt pabula fœtas,
Nec mala vicini pecoris contagia lædent.
Fortunate ſenex, his inter flumina nota,
Et fontes ſacros, frigus captabis opacum.
Hinc tibi, quæ ſemper vicino ab limite ſepes,
Hyblæis apibus florem depaſta ſalicti,
Sæpe levi ſomnum ſuadebit inire ſuſurro.
Hinc altâ ſub rupe canet frondator ad auras;
Nec tamen interea raucæ, tua cura, palumbes,
Nec gemere aëria ceſſabit turtur ab ulmo.

Happy old man! then ſtill thy farms reſtor'd,
Enough for thee, ſhall bleſs thy frugal board.
What tho' rough ſtones the naked ſoil o'erſpread,
Or marſhy bulruſh rear its wat'ry head,

No foreign food thy teeming ewes ſhall fear,
No touch contagious ſpread its influence here.
Happy old man! here 'mid th' accuſtom'd ſtreams
And ſacred ſprings, you'll ſhun the ſcorching beams;
While from yon willow-fence, thy paſture's bound,
The bees that ſuck their flow'ry ſtores around,
Shall ſweetly mingle, with the whiſpering boughs,
Their lulling murmurs, and invite repoſe:
While from ſteep rocks the pruner's ſong is heard;
Nor the ſoft-cooing dove, thy fav'rite bird,
Mean while ſhall ceaſe to breathe her melting ſtrain,
Nor turtles from th' aerial elm to 'plain.

WARTON.

It may be obſerved, that theſe two poems were produced by events that really happened; and may, therefore, be of uſe to prove, that we can always feel more than we can imagine, and that the moſt artful fiction muſt give way to truth.

I am, SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

DUBIUS.

NUMB. 95. TUESDAY, *October* 2, 1753.

—— *Dulcique animos novitate tenebo.* OVID.

And with ſweet novelty your ſoul detain.

IT is often charged upon writers, that with all their pretenſions to genius and diſcoveries, they do little more than copy one another; and that compoſitions obtruded upon the world with the pomp of novelty, contain only tedious repetitions of common ſentiments, or at beſt exhibit a tranſpoſition of known images, and give a new appearance to truth only by ſome ſlight difference of dreſs and decoration.

The allegation of reſemblance between authors, is indiſputably true; but the charge of plagiariſm, which is raiſed upon it, is not to be allowed with equal readineſs. A coincidence of ſentiment may eaſily happen without any communication, ſince there are many occaſions in which all reaſonable men will nearly think alike. Writers of all ages have had the ſame ſentiments, becauſe they have in all ages had the ſame objects of ſpeculation; the intereſts and paſſions, the virtues and vices of mankind, have been diverſified in different times, only by uneſſential and caſual varieties: and we muſt, therefore, expect in the works of all thoſe who attempt to deſcribe them, ſuch a likeneſs as we find in the

the pictures of the ſame perſon drawn in different periods of his life.

It is neceſſary, therefore, that before an author be charged with plagiariſm, one of the moſt reproachful, though, perhaps, not the moſt atrocious of literary crimes, the ſubject on which he treats ſhould be carefully conſidered. We do not wonder, that hiſtorians, relating the ſame facts, agree in their narration; or that authors, delivering the elements of ſcience, advance the ſame theorems, and lay down the ſame definitions: yet it is not wholly without uſe to mankind, that books are multiplied, and that different authors lay out their labours on the ſame ſubject; for there will always be ſome reaſon why one ſhould on particular occaſions, or to particular perſons, be preferable to another; ſome will be clear where others are obſcure, ſome will pleaſe by their ſtyle and others by their method, ſome by their embelliſhments and others by their ſimplicity, ſome by cloſeneſs and others by diffuſion.

The ſame indulgence is to be ſhewn to the writers of morality: right and wrong are immutable; and thoſe, therefore, who teach us to diſtinguiſh them, if they all teach us right, muſt agree with one another. The relations of ſocial life, and the duties reſulting from them, muſt be the ſame at all times and in all nations: ſome petty differences may be, indeed, produced, by forms of government or arbitrary cuſtoms; but the general doctrine can receive no alteration.

Yet it is not to be deſired, that morality ſhould be conſidered as interdicted to all future writers:

men will always be tempted to deviate from their duty, and will, therefore, always want a monitor to recall them; and a new book often ſeizes the attention of the publick, without any other claim than that it is new. There is likewiſe in compoſition, as in other things, a perpetual viciſſitude of faſhion; and truth is recommended at one time to regard, by appearances which at another would expoſe it to neglect; the author, therefore, who has judgment to diſcern the taſte of his contemporaries, and ſkill to gratify it, will have always an opportunity to deſerve well of mankind, by conveying inſtruction to them in a grateful vehicle.

There are likewiſe many modes of compoſition, by which a moraliſt may deſerve the name of an original writer: he may familiariſe his ſyſtem by dialogues after the manner of the ancients, or ſubtilize it into a ſeries of ſyllogiſtic arguments: he may enforce his doctrine by ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity, or enliven it by ſprightlineſs and gaiety; he may deliver his ſentiments in naked precepts, or illuſtrate them by hiſtorical examples; he may detain the ſtudious by the artful concatenation of a continued diſcourſe, or relieve the buſy by ſhort ſtrictures, and unconnected eſſays.

To excel in any of theſe forms of writing, will require a particular cultivation of the genius; whoever can attain to excellence, will be certain to engage a ſet of readers, whom no other method would have equally allured; and he that communicates truth with ſucceſs, muſt be numbered among the firſt benefactors to mankind.

The ſame obſervation may be extended likewiſe to the paſſions: their influence is uniform, and their effects nearly the ſame in every human breaſt: a man loves and hates, deſires and avoids, exactly like his neighbour; reſentment and ambition, avarice and indolence, diſcover themſelves by the ſame ſymptoms, in minds diſtant a thouſand years from one another.

Nothing, therefore, can be more unjuſt, than to charge an author with plagiariſm, merely becauſe he aſſigns to every cauſe its natural effect; and makes his perſonages act, as others in like circumſtances have always done. There are conceptions in which all men will agree, though each derives them from his own obſervation: whoever has been in love, will repreſent a lover impatient of every idea that interrupts his meditations on his miſtreſs, retiring to ſhades and ſolitude, that he may muſe without diſturbance on his approaching happineſs, or aſſociating himſelf with ſome friend that flatters his paſſion, and talking away the hours of abſence upon his darling ſubject. Whoever has been ſo unhappy as to have felt the miſeries of long-continued hatred, will, without any aſſiſtance from ancient volumes, be able to relate how the paſſions are kept in perpetual agitation, by the recollection of injury and meditations of revenge; how the blood boils at the name of the enemy, and life is worn away in contrivances of miſchief.

Every other paſſion is alike ſimple and limited, if it be conſidered only with regard to the breaſt which it inhabits; the anatomy of the mind, as that of the

the body, muſt perpetually exhibit the ſame appearances; and though by the continued induſtry of ſucceſſive inquirers, new movements will be from time to time diſcovered, they can affect only the minuter parts, and are commonly of more curioſity than importance.

It will now be natural to inquire, by what arts are the writers of the preſent and future ages to attract the notice and favour of mankind. They are to obſerve the alterations which time is always making in the modes of life, that they may gratify every generation with a picture of themſelves. Thus love is uniform, but courtſhip is perpetually varying: the different arts of gallantry, which beauty has inſpired, would of themſelves be ſufficient to fill a volume; ſometimes balls and ſerenades, ſometimes tournaments and adventures, have been employed to melt the hearts of ladies, who in another century have been ſenſible of ſcarce any other merit than that of riches, and liſtened only to jointures and pin-money. Thus the ambitious man has at all times been eager of wealth and power; but theſe hopes have been gratified in ſome countries by ſupplicating the people, and in others by flattering the prince: honour in ſome ſtates has been only the reward of military atchievements, in others it has been gained by noiſy turbulence and popular clamours. Avarice has worn a different form, as ſhe actuated the uſurer of *Rome*, and the ſtock-jobber of *England*; and idleneſs itſelf, how little ſoever inclined to the trouble of invention, has been forced from time to time to change its amuſe-

ments,

ments, and contrive different methods of wearing out the day.

Here then is the fund, from which thoſe who ſtudy mankind may fill their compoſitions with an inexhauſtible variety of images and alluſions: and he muſt be confeſſed to look with little attention upon ſcenes thus perpetually changing, who cannot catch ſome of the figures before they are made vulgar by reiterated deſcriptions.

It has been diſcovered by Sir *Iſaac Newton*, that the diſtinct and primogenial colours are only ſeven; but every eye can witneſs, that from various mixtures, in various proportions, infinite diverſifications of tints may be produced. In like manner, the paſſions of the mind, which put the world in motion, and produce all the buſtle and eagerneſs of the buſy crowds that ſwarm upon the earth; the paſſions, from whence ariſe all the pleaſures and pains that we ſee and hear of, if we analyſe the mind of man, are very few; but thoſe few agitated and combined, as external cauſes ſhall happen to operate, and modified by prevailing opinions and accidental caprices, make ſuch frequent alterations on the ſurface of life, that the ſhow, while we are buſied in delineating it, vaniſhes from the view, and a new ſet of objects ſucceed, doomed to the ſame ſhortneſs of duration with the former: thus curioſity may always find employment, and the buſy part of mankind will furniſh the contemplative with the materials of ſpeculation to the end of time.

The complaint, therefore, that all topicks are pre-occupied, is nothing more than the murmur of

ignorance

ignorance or idleneſs, by which ſome diſcourage others and ſome themſelves; the mutability of mankind will always furniſh writers with new images, and the luxuriance of fancy may always embelliſh them with new decorations.

NUMB. 99. TUESDAY, *October* 16, 1753.

—— *Magnis tamen excidit auſis.* OVID.

But in the glorious enterprize he dy'd. ADDISON.

IT has always been the practice of mankind, to judge of actions by the event. The ſame attempts, conducted in the ſame manner, but terminated by different ſucceſs, produce different judgments: they who attain their wiſhes, never want celebrators of their wiſdom and their virtue; and they that miſcarry, are quickly diſcovered to have been defective not only in mental but in moral qualities. The world will never be long without ſome good reaſon to hate the unhappy: their real faults are immediately detected; and if thoſe are not ſufficient to ſink them into infamy, an additional weight of calumny will be ſuperadded: he that fails in his endeavours after wealth or power, will not long retain either honeſty or courage.

This ſpecies of injuſtice has ſo long prevailed in univerſal practice, that it ſeems likewiſe to have infected

fected speculation: so few minds are able to separate the ideas of greatness and prosperity, that even Sir *William Temple* has determined, "that he who can "deserve the name of a hero, must not only be vir-"tuous but fortunate."

By this unreasonable distribution of praise and blame, none have suffered oftner than projectors, whose rapidity of imagination and vastness of design raise such envy in their fellow-mortals, that every eye watches for their fall, and every heart exults at their distresses: yet even a projector may gain favour by success; and the tongue that was prepared to hiss, then endeavours to excel others in loudness of applause.

When *Coriolanus*, in *Shakespeare*, deserted to *Aufidius*, the *Volscian* servants at first insulted him, even while he stood under the protection of the household gods; but when they saw that the project took effect, and the stranger was seated at the head of the table, one of them very judiciously observes, "that he always thought there was more in him than "he could think."

Machiavel has justly animadverted on the different notice taken by all succeeding times, of the two great projectors *Catiline* and *Cæsar*. Both formed the same project, and intended to raise themselves to power, by subverting the commonwealth: they pursued their design, perhaps, with equal abilities, and with equal virtue; but *Catiline* perished in the field, and *Cæsar* returned from *Pharsalia* with unlimited authority: and from that time, every monarch of the earth has thought himself honoured by a comparison with *Cæsar*; and *Cati-*

line

line has been never mentioned, but that his name might be applied to traitors and incendiaries.

In an age more remote, *Xerxes* projected the conquest of *Greece*, and brought down the power of *Asia* against it: but after the world had been filled with expectation and terror, his army was beaten, his fleet was destroyed, and *Xerxes* has been never mentioned without contempt.

A few years afterwards, *Greece* likewise had her turn of giving birth to a projector; who invading *Asia* with a small army, went forward in search of adventures, and by his escape from one danger, gained only more rashness to rush into another: he stormed city after city, over-ran kingdom after kingdom, fought battles only for barren victory, and invaded nations only that he might make his way through them to new invasions: but having been fortunate in the execution of his projects, he died with the name of *Alexander the Great*.

These are, indeed, events of ancient times; but human nature is always the same, and every age will afford us instances of publick censures influenced by events. The great business of the middle centuries, was the holy war; which undoubtedly was a noble project, and was for a long time prosecuted with a spirit equal to that with which it had been contrived: but the ardour of the *European* heroes only hurried them to destruction; for a long time they could not gain the territories for which they fought, and, when at last gained, they could not keep them: their expeditions, therefore, have been the scoff of idleness and ignorance, their understanding and their virtue have been equally vilified,

fied, their conduct has been ridiculed, and their cauſe has been defamed.

When *Columbus* had engaged king *Ferdinand* in the diſcovery of the other hemiſphere, the ſailors, with whom he embarked in the expedition, had ſo little confidence in their commander, that after having been long at ſea looking for coaſts, which they expected never to find, they raiſed a general mutiny, and demanded to return. He found means to ſooth them into a permiſſion to continue the ſame courſe three days longer, and on the evening of the third day deſcried land. Had the impatience of his crew denied him a few hours of the time requeſted, what had been his fate but to have come back with the infamy of a vain projector, who had betrayed the king's credulity to uſeleſs expences, and riſked his life in ſeeking countries that had no exiſtence? how would thoſe that had rejected his propoſals, have triumphed in their acuteneſs? and when would his name have been mentioned, but with the makers of potable gold and malleable glaſs?

The laſt royal projectors with whom the world has been troubled, were *Charles* of *Sweden* and the *Czar* of *Muſcovy*. *Charles*, if any judgment may be formed of his deſigns by his meaſures and his enquiries, had purpoſed firſt to dethrone the *Czar*, then to lead his army through pathleſs deſarts into *China*, thence to make his way by the ſword through the whole circuit of *Aſia*, and by the conqueſt of *Turkey* to unite *Sweden* with his new dominions: but this mighty project was cruſhed at *Pultowa*; and *Charles* has ſince been conſidered as a madman by thoſe

thoſe powers, who ſent their ambaſſadors to ſolicit his friendſhip, and their generals "to learn under him the "art of war."

The *Czar* found employment ſufficient in his own dominions, and amuſed himſelf in digging canals, and building cities; murdering his ſubjects with inſufferable fatigues, and tranſplanting nations from one corner of his dominions to another, without regretting the thouſands that periſhed on the way: but he attained his end, he made his people formidable, and is numbered by fame among the demi-gods.

I am far from intending to vindicate the ſanguinary projects of heroes and conquerors, and would wiſh rather to diminiſh the reputation of their ſucceſs, than the infamy of their miſcarriages: for I cannot conceive, why he that has burnt cities, waſted nations, and filled the world with horror and deſolation, ſhould be more kindly regarded by mankind, than he that died in the rudiments of wickedneſs; why he that accompliſhed miſchief ſhould be glorious, and he that only endeavoured it ſhould be criminal. I would wiſh *Cæſar* and *Catiline*, *Xerxes* and *Alexander*, *Charles* and *Peter*, huddled together in obſcurity or deteſtation.

But there is another ſpecies of projectors, to whom I would willingly conciliate mankind; whoſe ends are generally laudable, and whoſe labours are innocent; who are ſearching out new powers of nature, or contriving new works of art; but who are yet perſecuted with inceſſant obloquy, and whom the univerſal contempt with which they are treated, often debars from that

that ſucceſs which their induſtry would obtain, if it were permitted to act without oppoſition.

They who find themſelves inclined to cenſure new undertakings, only becauſe they are new, ſhould conſider, that the folly of projection is very ſeldom the folly of a fool; it is commonly the ebullition of a capacious mind, crowded with variety of knowledge, and heated with intenſeneſs of thought; it proceeds often from the conſciouſneſs of uncommon powers, from the confidence of thoſe, who having already done much, are eaſily perſuaded that they can do more. When *Rowley* had completed the orrery, he attempted the perpetual motion; when *Boyle* had exhauſted the ſecrets of vulgar chemiſtry, he turned his thoughts to the work of tranſmutation.

A projector generally unites thoſe qualities which have the faireſt claim to veneration, extent of knowledge, and greatneſs of deſign: it was ſaid of *Catiline*, "immoderata, incredibilia, nimis alta ſemper "cupiebat." Projectors of all kinds agree in their intellects, though they differ in their morals; they all fail by attempting things beyond their power, by deſpiſing vulgar attainments, and aſpiring to performances, to which, perhaps, nature has not proportioned the force of man: when they fail, therefore, they fail not by idleneſs or timidity, but by raſh adventure and fruitleſs diligence.

That the attempts of ſuch men will often miſcarry, we may reaſonably expect; yet from ſuch men, and ſuch only, are we to hope for the cultivation of thoſe parts of nature which lie yet waſte, and the invention of thoſe arts which are yet

wanting to the felicity of life. If they are, therefore, univerſally diſcouraged, art and diſcovery can make no advances. Whatever is attempted without previous certainty of ſucceſs, may be conſidered as a project, and amongſt narrow minds may, therefore, expoſe its author to cenſure and contempt; and if the liberty of laughing be once indulged, every man will laugh at what he does not underſtand, every project will be conſidered as madneſs, and every great or new deſign will be cenſured as a project. Men, unaccuſtomed to reaſon and reſearches, think every enterprize impracticable, which is extended beyond common effects, or compriſes many intermediate operations. Many that preſume to laugh at projectors, would conſider a flight through the air in a winged chariot, and the movement of a mighty engine by the ſteam of water, as equally the dreams of mechanic lunacy; and would hear, with equal negligence, of the union of the *Thames* and *Severn* by a canal, and the ſcheme of *Albuquerque*, the viceroy of the *Indies*, who in the rage of hoſtility had contrived to make *Egypt* a barren deſart, by turning the *Nile* into the *Red Sea*.

Thoſe who have attempted much, have ſeldom failed to perform more than thoſe who never deviate from the common roads of action: many valuable preparations of chemiſtry are ſuppoſed to have riſen from unſucceſsful enquiries after the grand elixir: it is, therefore, juſt to encourage thoſe who endeavour to enlarge the power of art, ſince they often ſucceed beyond expectation; and when they fail, may ſometimes benefit the world even by their miſcarriages.

NUMB. 102. SATURDAY, *October* 27, 1753.

> —— *Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te*
> *Conatus non pœniteat votique peracti?* JUV.
>
> What in the conduct of our life appears
> So well design'd, so luckily begun,
> But, when we have our wish, we wish undone. DRYDEN.

To the ADVENTURER.

SIR,

I HAVE been for many years a trader in *London.* My beginning was narrow, and my stock small; I was, therefore, a long time brow-beaten and despised by those, who having more money thought they had more merit than myself. I did not, however, suffer my resentment to instigate me to any mean arts of supplantation, nor my eagerness of riches to betray me to any indirect methods of gain; I pursued my business with incessant assiduity, supported by the hope of being one day richer than those who contemned me; and had, upon every annual review of my books, the satisfaction of finding my fortune increased beyond my expectation.

In a few years my industry and probity were fully recompensed, my wealth was really great, and my reputation for wealth still greater. I had large warehouses crowded with goods, and considerable sums in the publick funds; I was caressed upon the *Exchange,*

Exchange by the moſt eminent merchants; became the oracle of the common council; was ſolicited to engage in all commercial undertakings; was flattered with the hopes of becoming in a ſhort time one of the directors of a wealthy company; and, to complete my mercantile honours, enjoyed the expenſive happineſs of fining for ſheriff.

Riches, you know, eaſily produce riches: when I had arrived to this degree of wealth, I had no longer any obſtruction or oppoſition to fear; new acquiſitions were hourly brought within my reach, and I continued for ſome years longer to heap thouſands upon thouſands.

At laſt I reſolved to complete the circle of a citizen's proſperity by the purchaſe of an eſtate in the country, and to cloſe my life in retirement. From the hour that this deſign entered my imagination, I found the fatigues of my employment every day more oppreſſive, and perſuaded myſelf that I was no longer equal to perpetual attention, and that my health would ſoon be deſtroyed by the torment and diſtraction of extenſive buſineſs. I could image to myſelf no happineſs, but in vacant jollity, and uninterrupted leiſure; nor entertain my friends with any other topick, than the vexation and uncertainty of trade, and the happineſs of rural privacy.

But notwithſtanding theſe declarations, I could not at once reconcile myſelf to the thoughts of ceaſing to get money; and though I was every day enquiring for a purchaſe, I found ſome reaſon for rejecting all that were offered me; and, indeed, had accumulated ſo many beauties and conveniences in my idea of the ſpot, where I was finally to be

happy, that, perhaps, the world might have been travelled over, without diſcovery of a place which would not have been defective in ſome particular.

Thus I went on ſtill talking of retirement, and ſtill refuſing to retire; my friends began to laugh at my delays, and I grew aſhamed to trifle longer with my own inclinations; an eſtate was at length purchaſed, I transferred my ſtock to a prudent young man who had married my daughter, went down into the country, and commenced lord of a ſpacious manor.

Here for ſome time I found happineſs equal to my expectation. I reformed the old houſe according to the advice of the beſt architects, I threw down the walls of the garden, and incloſed it with paliſades, planted long avenues of trees, filled a green-houſe with exotick plants, dug a new canal, and threw the earth into the old moat.

The fame of theſe expenſive improvements brought in all the country to ſee the ſhew. I entertained my viſitors with great liberality, led them round my gardens, ſhewed them my apartments, laid before them plans for new decorations, and was gratified by the wonder of ſome and the envy of others.

I was envied; but how little can one man judge of the condition of another? The time was now coming, in which affluence and ſplendour could no longer make me pleaſed with myſelf. I had built till the imagination of the architect was exhauſted; I had added one convenience to another, till I knew not what more to wiſh or to deſign; I had laid out my gardens, planted my park, and completed my

water-works; and what now remained to be done? what, but to look up to turrets, of which when they were once raifed I had no farther ufe, to range over apartments where time was tarnifhing the furniture, to ftand by the cafcade of which I fcarcely now perceived the found, and to watch the growth of woods that muft give their fhade to a diftant generation.

In this gloomy inactivity, is every day begun and ended: the happinefs that I have been fo long procuring is now at an end, becaufe it has been procured; I wander from room to room till I am weary of myfelf; I ride out to a neighbouring hill in the centre of my eftate, from whence all my lands lie in profpect round me; I fee nothing that I have not feen before, and return home difappointed, though I knew that I had nothing to expect.

In my happy days of bufinefs I had been accuftomed to rife early in the morning; and remember the time when I grieved that the night came fo foon upon me, and obliged me for a few hours to fhut out affluence and profperity. I now feldom fee the rifing fun, but to "tell him," with the fallen angel, "how I hate his beams. I awake from fleep as to languor or imprifonment, and have no employment for the firft hour but to confider by what art I fhall rid myfelf of the fecond. I protract the breakfaft as long as I can, becaufe when it is ended I have no call for my attention, till I can with fome degree of decency grow impatient for my dinner. If I could dine all my life, I fhould be happy; I eat not becaufe I am hungry, but becaufe I am idle: but, alas! the time quickly comes when I can eat no longer; and

and ſo ill does my conſtitution ſecond my inclination, that I cannot bear ſtrong liquors; ſeven hours muſt then be endured before I ſhall ſup; but ſupper comes at laſt, the more welcome as it is in a ſhort time ſucceeded by ſleep.

Such, Mr. *Adventurer*, is the happineſs, the hope of which ſeduced me from the duties and pleaſures of a mercantile life. I ſhall be told by thoſe who read my narrative, that there are many means of innocent amuſement, and many ſchemes of uſeful employment, which I do not appear ever to have known; and that nature and art have provided pleaſures, by which, without the drudgery of ſettled buſineſs, the active may be engaged, the ſolitary ſoothed, and the ſocial entertained.

Theſe arts, Sir, I have tried. When firſt I took poſſeſſion of my eſtate, in conformity to the taſte of my neighbours, I bought guns and nets, filled my kennel with dogs and my ſtable with horſes; but a little experience ſhewed me, that theſe inſtruments of rural felicity would afford me few gratifications. I never ſhot but to miſs the mark, and, to confeſs the truth, was afraid of the fire of my own gun. I could diſcover no muſic in the cry of the dogs, nor could diveſt myſelf of pity for the animal whoſe peaceful and inoffenſive life was ſacrificed to our ſport. I was not, indeed, always at leiſure to reflect upon her danger; for my horſe, who had been bred to the chaſe, did not always regard my choice either of ſpeed or way, but leaped hedges and ditches at his own diſcretion, and hurried me along with the dogs, to the great diverſion of my brother ſportſmen. His eagerneſs of purſuit once incited him

him to ſwim a river; and I had leiſure to reſolve in the water, that I would never hazard my life again for the deſtruction of a hare.

I then ordered books to be procured, and by the direction of the vicar had in a few weeks a cloſet elegantly furniſhed. You will, perhaps, be ſurpriſed when I ſhall tell you, that when once I had ranged them according to their ſizes, and piled them up in regular gradations, I had received all the pleaſure which they could give me. I am not able to excite in myſelf any curioſity after events which have been long paſſed, and in which I can, therefore, have no intereſt; I am utterly unconcerned to know whether *Tully* or *Demoſthenes* excelled in oratory, whether *Hannibal* loſt *Italy* by his own negligence or the corruption of his countrymen. I have no ſkill in controverſial learning, nor can conceive why ſo many volumes ſhould have been written upon queſtions, which I have lived ſo long and ſo happily without underſtanding. I once reſolved to go through the volumes relating to the office of juſtice of the peace, but found them ſo crabbed and intricate, that in leſs than a month I deſiſted in deſpair, and reſolved to ſupply my deficiencies by paying a competent ſalary to a ſkilful clerk.

I am naturally inclined to hoſpitality, and for ſome time kept up a conſtant intercourſe of viſits with the neighbouring gentlemen: but though they are eaſily brought about me by better wine than they can find at any other houſe, I am not much relieved by their converſation; they have no ſkill in commerce or the ſtocks, and I have no knowledge of the hiſtory of families or the factions of the

country; ſo that when the firſt civilities are over, they uſually talk to one another, and I am left alone in the midſt of the company. Though I cannot drink myſelf, I am obliged to encourage the circulation of the glaſs; their mirth grows more turbulent and obſtreperous; and before their merriment is at an end, I am ſick with diſguſt, and, perhaps, reproached with my ſobriety, or by ſome ſly inſinuations inſulted as a cit.

Such, Mr. *Adventurer*, is the life to which I am condemned by a fooliſh endeavour to be happy by imitation; ſuch is the happineſs to which I pleaſed myſelf with approaching, and which I conſidered as the chief end of my cares and my labours. I toiled year after year with cheerfulneſs, in expectation of the happy hour in which I might be idle; the privilege of idleneſs is attained, but has not brought with it the bleſſing of tranquillity.

I am,

Yours, &c.

MERCATOR.

NUMB. 107. TUESDAY, *November* 13, 1753.

—— *Sub judice lis eſt.* HOR.

And of their vain diſputings find no end. FRANCIS.

IT has been ſometimes aſked by thoſe, who find the appearance of wiſdom more eaſily attained by queſtions than ſolutions, how it comes to paſs, that the world is divided by ſuch difference of opinion; and why men, equally reaſonable, and equally lovers of truth, do not always think in the ſame manner?

With regard to ſimple propoſitions, where the terms are underſtood, and the whole ſubject is comprehended at once, there is ſuch an uniformity of ſentiment among all human beings, that, for many ages, a very numerous ſet of notions were ſuppoſed to be innate, or neceſſarily co-exiſtent with the faculty of reaſon: it being imagined, that univerſal agreement could proceed only from the invariable dictates of the univerſal parent.

In queſtions diffuſe and compounded, this ſimilarity of determination is no longer to be expected. At our firſt ſally into the intellectual world, we all march together along one ſtraight and open road; but as we proceed further, and wider proſpects open to our view, every eye fixes upon a different ſcene; we divide into various paths, and, as we move forward, are ſtill at a greater diſtance from each other.

As

As a queſtion becomes more complicated and involved, and extends to a greater number of relations, diſagreement of opinion will always be multiplied; not becauſe we are irrational, but becauſe we are finite beings, furniſhed with different kinds of knowledge, exerting different degrees of attention, one diſcovering conſequences which eſcape another, none taking in the whole concatenation of cauſes and effects, and moſt comprehending but a very ſmall part, each comparing what he obſerves with a different criterion, and each referring it to a different purpoſe.

Where, then, is the wonder, that they who ſee only a ſmall part ſhould judge erroneouſly of the whole? or that they, who ſee different and diſſimilar parts, ſhould judge differently from each other?

Whatever has various reſpects, muſt have various appearances of good and evil, beauty or deformity; thus, the gardener tears up as a weed, the plant which the phyſician gathers as a medicine; and "a general," ſays Sir *Kenelm Digby*, "will look with pleaſure over a plain, as a fit place on which the fate of "empires might be decided in battle, which the farmer "will deſpiſe as bleak and barren, neither fruitful of "paſturage, nor fit for tillage."

Two men examining the ſame queſtion proceed commonly like the phyſician and gardener in ſelecting herbs, or the farmer and hero looking on the plain; they bring minds impreſſed with different notions, and direct their inquiries to different ends; they form, therefore, contrary concluſions, and each wonders at the other's abſurdity.

We

We have lefs reafon to be furprifed or offended when we find others differ from us in opinion, becaufe we very often differ from ourfelves. How often we alter our minds, we do not always remark; becaufe the change is fometimes made imperceptibly and gradually, and the laft conviction effaces all memory of the former: yet every man, accuftomed from time to time to take a furvey of his own notions, will by a flight retrofpection be able to difcover, that his mind has fuffered many revolutions; that the fame things have in the feveral parts of his life been condemned and approved, purfued and fhunned: and that on many occafions, even when his practice has been fteady, his mind has been wavering, and he has perfifted in a fcheme of action, rather becaufe he feared the cenfure of inconftancy, than becaufe he was always pleafed with his own choice.

Of the different faces fhewn by the fame objects as they are viewed on oppofite fides, and of the different inclinations which they muft conftantly raife in him that contemplates them, a more ftriking example cannot eafily be found than two *Greek* epigrammatifts will afford us in their accounts of human life, which I fhall lay before the reader in *Englifh* profe.

Pofidippus, a comick poet, utters this complaint; "Through which of the paths of life is it eligible "to pafs? In publick affemblies are debates and "troublefome affairs: domeftick privacies are haunt-"ed with anxieties; in the country is labour; on "the fea is terror: in a foreign land, he that has "money muft live in fear, he that wants it muft "pine in diftrefs; are you married? you are trou-"bled

"bled with suspicions; are you single? you languish
"in solitude; children occasion toil, and a childless
"life is a state of destitution; the time of youth
"is a time of folly, and gray hairs are loaded with
"infirmity. This choice only, therefore, can be
"made, either never to receive being, or immediately
"to lose it."

Such and so gloomy is the prospect, which *Posidippus* has laid before us. But we are not to acquiesce too hastily in his determination against the value of existence: for *Metrodorus*, a philosopher of *Athens*, has shewn, that life has pleasures as well as pains; and having exhibited the present state of man in brighter colours, draws, with equal appearance of reason, a contrary conclusion.

"You may pass well through any of the paths of
"life. In publick assemblies are honours and trans-
"actions of wisdom; in domestick privacy is still-
"ness and quiet: in the country are the beauties of
"nature; on the sea is the hope of gain; in a
"foreign land, he that is rich is honoured, he that is
"poor may keep his poverty secret; are you married?
"you have a cheerful house; are you single? you are
"unincumbered; children are objects of affection, to
"be without children is to be without care: the time
"of youth is the time of vigour, and gray hairs are
"made venerable by piety. It will, therefore, never
"be a wise man's choice, either not to obtain ex-
"istence, or to lose it; for every state of life has its
"felicity."

In these epigrams are included most of the questions which have engaged the speculations of the enquirers after happiness; and though they will not

not much aſſiſt our determinations, they may, perhaps, equally promote our quiet, by ſhewing that no abſolute determination ever can be formed.

Whether a publick ſtation, or private life be deſirable, has always been debated. We ſee here both the allurements and diſcouragements of civil employments: on one ſide there is trouble, on the other honour; the management of affairs is vexatious and difficult, but it is the only duty in which wiſdom can be conſpicuouſly diſplayed: it muſt then ſtill be left to every man to chooſe either eaſe or glory; nor can any general precept be given, ſince no man can be happy by the preſcription of another.

Thus, what is ſaid of children by *Poſidippus*, "that "they are occaſions of fatigue," and by *Metrodorus*, "that they are objects of affection," is equally certain; but whether they will give moſt pain or pleaſure, muſt depend on their future conduct and diſpoſitions, on many cauſes over which the parent can have little influence: there is, therefore, room for all the caprices of imagination, and deſire muſt be proportioned to the hope or fear that ſhall happen to predominate.

Such is the uncertainty in which we are always likely to remain with regard to queſtions, wherein we have moſt intereſt, and which every day affords us freſh opportunity to examine: we may examine, indeed, but we never can decide, becauſe our faculties are unequal to the ſubject: we ſee a little, and form an opinion; we ſee more, and change it.

This inconſtancy and unſteadineſs, to which we muſt ſo often find ourſelves liable, ought certainly to teach us moderation and forbearance towards

thoſe

those who cannot accommodate themselves to our sentiments: if they are deceived, we have no right to attribute their mistake to obstinacy or negligence, because we likewise have been mistaken; we may, perhaps, again change our own opinion; and what excuse shall we be able to find for aversion and malignity conceived against him, whom we shall then find to have committed no fault, and who offended us only by refusing to follow us into error?

It may likewise contribute to soften that resentment which pride naturally raises against opposition, if we consider, that he who differs from us, does not always contradict us; he has one view of an object, and we have another; each describes what he sees with equal fidelity, and each regulates his steps by his own eyes: one man, with *Posidippus*, looks on celibacy as a state of gloomy solitude, without a partner in joy or a comforter in sorrow; the other considers it, with *Metrodorus*, as a state free from incumbrances, in which a man is at liberty to choose his own gratifications, to remove from place to place in quest of pleasure, and to think of nothing but merriment and diversion: full of these notions one hastens to choose a wife, and the other laughs at his rashness, or pities his ignorance; yet it is possible that each is right, but that each is right only for himself.

Life is not the object of science: we see a little, very little; and what is beyond we only can conjecture. If we enquire of those who have gone before us, we receive small satisfaction; some have travelled life without observation, and some willingly mislead us. The only thought, therefore, on which we can

repose

repose with comfort, is that which presents to us the care of Providence, whose eye takes in the whole of things, and under whose direction all involuntary errors will terminate in happiness.

NUMB. 108. SATURDAY, *November* 17, 1753.

Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetuo una dormienda. CATULLUS.

When once the short-liv'd mortal dies,
A night eternal seals his eyes. ADDISON.

IT may have been observed by every reader, that there are certain topicks which never are exhausted. Of some images and sentiments the mind of man may be said to be enamoured; it meets them, however often they occur, with the same ardour which a lover feels at the sight of his mistress, and parts from them with the same regret when they can no longer be enjoyed.

Of this kind are many descriptions which the poets have transcribed from each other, and their successors will probably copy to the end of time; which will continue to engage, or, as the *French* term it, to flatter the imagination, as long as human nature shall remain the same.

When a poet mentions the spring, we know that the zephyrs are about to whisper, that the groves are to recover their verdure, the linnets to warble forth their notes of love, and the flocks and herds

to friſk over vales painted with flowers: yet, who is there ſo inſenſible of the beauties of nature, ſo little delighted with the renovation of the world, as not to feel his heart bound at the mention of the ſpring?

When night overſhadows a romantick ſcene, all is ſtillneſs, ſilence, and quiet; the poets of the grove ceaſe their melody, the moon towers over the world in gentle majeſty, men forget their labours and their cares, and every paſſion and purſuit is for a while ſuſpended. All this we know already, yet we hear it repeated without wearineſs; becauſe ſuch is generally the life of man, that he is pleaſed to think on the time when he ſhall pauſe from a ſenſe of his condition.

When a poetical grove invites us to its covert, we know that we ſhall find what we have already ſeen, a limpid brook murmuring over pebbles, a bank diverſified with flowers, a green arch that excludes the ſun, and a natural grot ſhaded with myrtles; yet who can forbear to enter the pleaſing gloom, to enjoy coolneſs and privacy, and gratify himſelf once more by ſcenes with which nature has formed him to be delighted?

Many moral ſentiments likewiſe are ſo adapted to our ſtate, that we find approbation whenever they ſolicit it, and are ſeldom read without exciting a gentle emotion in the mind: ſuch is the compariſon of the life of man with the duration of a flower, a thought which, perhaps, every nation has heard warbled in its own language, from the inſpired poets of the *Hebrews* to our own times: yet this compariſon muſt always pleaſe, becauſe every heart feels

its juſtneſs, and every hour confirms it by example.

Such, likewiſe, is the precept that directs us to uſe the preſent hour, and refer nothing to a diſtant time, which we are uncertain whether we ſhall reach: this every moraliſt may venture to inculcate, becauſe it will always be approved, and becauſe it is always forgotten.

This rule is, indeed, every day enforced, by arguments more powerful than the diſſertations of moraliſts: we ſee men pleaſing themſelves with future happineſs, fixing a certain hour for the completion of their wiſhes, and periſhing ſome at a greater and ſome at a leſs diſtance from the happy time; all complaining of their diſappointments, and lamenting that they had ſuffered the years which Heaven allowed them, to paſs without improvement, and deferred the principal purpoſe of their lives to the time when life itſelf was to forſake them.

It is not only uncertain, whether, through all the caſualties and dangers which beſet the life of man, we ſhall be able to reach the time appointed for happineſs or wiſdom; but it is likely, that whatever now hinders us from doing that which our reaſon and conſcience declare neceſſary to be done, will equally obſtruct us in times to come. It is eaſy for the imagination, operating on things not yet exiſting, to pleaſe itſelf with ſcenes of unmingled felicity, or plan out courſes of uniform virtue: but good and evil are in real life inſeparably united; habits grow ſtronger by indulgence; and reaſon loſes her dignity, in proportion as ſhe has oftener yielded to temptation: "he that cannot live well

"to-day," says *Martial*, "will be less qualified to "live well to-morrow."

Of the uncertainty of every human good, every human being seems to be convinced; yet this uncertainty is voluntarily increased by unnecessary delay, whether we respect external causes, or consider the nature of our own minds. He that now feels a desire to do right, and wishes to regulate his life according to his reason, is not sure that, at any future time assignable, he shall be able to rekindle the same ardour; he that has now an opportunity offered him of breaking loose from vice and folly, cannot know, but that he shall hereafter be more entangled, and struggle for freedom without obtaining it.

We are so unwilling to believe any thing to our own disadvantage, that we will always imagine the perspicacity of our judgment and the strength of our resolution more likely to increase than to grow less by time; and, therefore, conclude, that the will to pursue laudable purposes, will be always seconded by the power.

But however we may be deceived in calculating the strength of our faculties, we cannot doubt the uncertainty of that life in which they must be employed: we see every day the unexpected death of our friends and our enemies, we see new graves hourly opened for men older and younger than ourselves, for the cautious and the careless, the dissolute and the temperate, for men who like us were providing to enjoy or improve hours now irreversibly cut off; we see all this, and yet, instead of living, let year glide after year in preparations to live.

Men are ſo frequently cut off in the midſt of their projections, that ſudden death cauſes little emotion in them that behold it, unleſs it be impreſſed upon the attention by uncommon circumſtances. I, like every other man, have outlived multitudes, have ſeen ambition ſink in its triumphs, and beauty periſh in its bloom; but have been ſeldom ſo much affected as by the fate of *Euryalus*, whom I lately loſt as I began to love him.

Euryalus had for ſome time flouriſhed in a lucrative profeſſion; but having ſuffered his imagination to be fired by an unextinguiſhable curioſity, he grew weary of the ſame dull round of life, reſolved to haraſs himſelf no longer with the drudgery of getting money, but to quit his buſineſs and his profit, and enjoy for a few years the pleaſures of travel. His friends heard him proclaim his reſolution without ſuſpecting that he intended to purſue it; but he was conſtant to his purpoſe, and with great expedition cloſed his accounts and ſold his moveables, paſſed a few days in bidding farewell to his companions, and with all the eagerneſs of romantick chivalry croſſed the ſea in ſearch of happineſs. Whatever place was renowned in ancient or modern hiſtory, whatever region art or nature had diſtinguiſhed, he determined to viſit: full of deſign and hope he landed on the continent; his friends expected accounts from him of the new ſcenes that opened in his progreſs, but were informed in a few days that *Euryalus* was dead.

Such was the end of *Euryalus*. He is entered that ſtate, whence none ever ſhall return; and can now only benefit his friends, by remaining in their me-

mories a permanent and efficacious inftance of the blindnefs of defire, and the uncertainty of all terreftrial good. But, perhaps, every man has like me loft an *Euryalus*, has known a friend die with happinefs in his grafp; and yet every man continues to think himfelf fecure of life, and defers to fome future time of leifure what he knows it will be fatal to have finally omitted.

It is, indeed, with this as with other frailties inherent in our nature; the defire of deferring to another time, what cannot be done without endurance of fome pain, or forbearance of fome pleafure, will, perhaps, never be totally overcome or fuppreffed; there will always be fomething that we fhall wifh to have finifhed, and be neverthelefs unwilling to begin: but againft this unwillingnefs it is our duty to ftruggle, and every conqueft over our paffions will make way for an eafier conqueft; cuftom is equally forcible to bad and good; nature will always be at variance with reafon, but will rebel more feebly as fhe is oftener fubdued.

The common neglect of the prefent hour is more fhameful and criminal, as no man is betrayed to it by error, but admits it by negligence. Of the inftability of life, the weakeft underftanding never thinks wrong, though the ftrongeft often omits to think juftly: reafon and experience are always ready to inform us of our real ftate; but we refufe to liften to their fuggeftions, becaufe we feel our hearts unwilling to obey them: but, furely, nothing is more unworthy of a reafonable being, than to fhut his eyes, when he fees the road which he is commanded to travel, that he may deviate with fewer reproaches

from

from himſelf; nor could any motive to tenderneſs, except the conſciouſneſs that we have all been guilty of the ſame fault, diſpoſe us to pity thoſe who thus conſign themſelves to voluntary ruin.

NUMB. 111. TUESDAY, *November* 27, 1753.

——— *Quæ non fecimus ipſi,*
Vix ea noſtra voco. OVID.

The deeds of long-deſcended anceſtors
Are but by grace of imputation ours. DRYDEN.

THE evils inſeparably annexed to the preſent condition of man, are ſo numerous and afflictive, that it has been, from age to age, the taſk of ſome to bewail, and of others to ſolace them; and he, therefore, will be in danger of ſeeing a common enemy, who ſhall attempt to depreciate the few pleaſures and felicities which nature has allowed us.

Yet I will confeſs, that I have ſometimes employed my thoughts in examining the pretenſions that are made to happineſs, by the ſplendid and envied condition of life; and have not thought the hour unprofitably ſpent, when I have detected the impoſture of counterfeit advantages, and found diſquiet lurking under falſe appearances of gaiety and greatneſs.

It is asserted by a tragick poet, that "est miser "nemo nisi comparatus," "no man is miserable, "but as he is compared with others happier than "himself:" this position is not strictly and philosophically true. He might have said, with rigorous propriety, that no man is happy but as he is compared with the miserable; for such is the state of this world, that we find in it absolute misery, but happiness only comparative; we may incur as much pain as we can possibly endure, though we can never obtain as much happiness as we might possibly enjoy.

Yet it is certain likewise, that many of our miseries are merely comparative: we are often made unhappy, not by the presence of any real evil, but by the absence of some fictitious good; of something which is not required by any real want of nature, which has not in itself any power of gratification, and which neither reason nor fancy would have prompted us to wish, did we not see it in the possession of others.

For a mind diseased with vain longings after unattainable advantages, no medicine can be prescribed, but an impartial enquiry into the real worth of that which is so ardently desired. It is well known, how much the mind, as well as the eye, is deceived by distance; and, perhaps, it will be found, that of many imagined blessings it may be doubted, whether he that wants or possesses them has more reason to be satisfied with his lot.

The dignity of high birth and long extraction, no man, to whom nature has denied it, can confer upon himself; and, therefore, it deserves to be considered, whether

whether the want of that which can never be gained, may not easily be endured. It is true, that if we consider the triumph and delight with which most of those recount their ancestors who have ancestors to recount, and the artifices by which some who have risen to unexpected fortune endeavour to insert themselves into an honourable stem, we shall be inclined to fancy that wisdom or virtue may be had by inheritance, or that all the excellencies of a line of progenitors are accumulated on their descendant. Reason, indeed, will soon inform us, that our estimation of birth is arbitrary and capricious, and that dead ancestors can have no influence but upon imagination: let it then be examined, whether one dream may not operate in the place of another; whether he that owes nothing to forefathers, may not receive equal pleasure from the consciousness of owing all to himself; whether he may not, with a little meditation, find it more honourable to found than to continue a family, and to gain dignity than transmit it; whether, if he receives no dignity from the virtues of his family, he does not likewise escape the danger of being disgraced by their crimes; and whether he that brings a new name into the world, has not the convenience of playing the game of life without a stake, and opportunity of winning much though he has nothing to lose.

There is another opinion concerning happiness, which approaches much more nearly to universality, but which may, perhaps, with equal reason be disputed. The pretensions to ancestral honours many of the sons of earth easily see to be ill-grounded; but all agree to celebrate the advantage of hereditary

riches, and to consider those as the minions of fortune, who are wealthy from their cradles, whose estate is "res non parta labore sed relicta;" "the acquisition of another, not of themselves;" and whom a father's industry has dispensed from a laborious attention to arts or commerce, and left at liberty to dispose of life as fancy shall direct them.

If every man were wise and virtuous, capable to discern the best use of time, and resolute to practise it; it might be granted, I think, without hesitation, that total liberty would be a blessing; and that it would be desirable to be left at large to the exercise of religious and social duties, without the interruption of importunate avocations.

But since felicity is relative, and that which is the means of happiness to one man may be to another the cause of misery, we are to consider, what state is best adapted to human nature in its present degeneracy and frailty. And, surely, to far the greater number it is highly expedient, that they should by some settled scheme of duties be rescued from the tyranny of caprice, that they should be driven on by necessity through the paths of life with their attention confined to a stated task, that they may be less at leisure to deviate into mischief at the call of folly.

When we observe the lives of those whom an ample inheritance has let loose to their own direction, what do we discover that can excite our envy? Their time seems not to pass with much applause from others, or satisfaction to themselves: many squander their exuberance of fortune in luxury and debauchery, and have no other use of money than to inflame their passions, and riot in a wide range of licentiousness;

licentiouſneſs; others, leſs criminal indeed, but, ſurely, not much to be praiſed, lie down to ſleep, and riſe up to trifle, are employed every morning in finding expedients to rid themſelves of the day, chaſe pleaſure through all the places of publick reſort, fly from *London* to *Bath*, and from *Bath* to *London*, without any other reaſon for changing place, but that they go in queſt of company as idle and as vagrant as themſelves, always endeavouring to raiſe ſome new deſire that they may have ſomething to purſue, to rekindle ſome hope which they know will be diſappointed, changing one amuſement for another which a few months will make equally inſipid, or ſinking into languor and diſeaſe for want of ſomething to actuate their bodies or exhilarate their minds.

Whoever has frequented thoſe places, where idlers aſſemble to eſcape from ſolitude, knows that this is generally the ſtate of the wealthy; and from this ſtate it is no great hardſhip to be debarred. No man can be happy in total idleneſs: he that ſhould be condemned to lie torpid and motionleſs, "would fly for "recreation," ſays *South*, "to the mines and the gal-"lies;" and it is well, when nature or fortune find employment for thoſe, who would not have known how to procure it for themſelves.

He, whoſe mind is engaged by the acquiſition or improvement of a fortune, not only eſcapes the inſipidity of indifference, and the tedioufneſs of inactivity, but gains enjoyments wholly unknown to thoſe, who live lazily on the toil of others; for life affords no higher pleaſure than that of ſurmounting difficulties, paſſing from one ſtep of ſucceſs to another, forming new wiſhes, and ſeeing them gratified. He that

labours

labours in any great or laudable undertaking, has his fatigues first supported by hope, and afterwards rewarded by joy; he is always moving to a certain end, and when he has attained it, an end more distant invites him to a new pursuit.

It does not, indeed, always happen, that diligence is fortunate; the wisest schemes are broken by unexpected accidents; the most constant perseverance sometimes toils through life without a recompence; but labour, though unsuccessful, is more eligible than idleness; he that prosecutes a lawful purpose by lawful means, acts always with the approbation of his own reason; he is animated through the course of his endeavours by an expectation which, though not certain, he knows to be just; and is at last comforted in his disappointment, by the consciousness that he has not failed by his own fault.

That kind of life is most happy which affords us most opportunities of gaining our own esteem; and what can any man infer in his own favour from a condition to which, however prosperous, he contributed nothing, and which the vilest and weakest of the species would have obtained by the same right, had he happened to be the son of the same father.

To strive with difficulties, and to conquer them, is the highest human felicity; the next, is to strive, and deserve to conquer: but he whose life has passed without a contest, and who can boast neither success nor merit, can survey himself only as a useless filler of existence; and if he is content with his own character, must owe his satisfaction to insensibility.

Thus it appears that the satirist advised rightly, when he directed us to resign ourselves to the hands

of

of Heaven, and to leave to ſuperior powers the determination of our lot:

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris:
Carior eſt illis homo quam ſibi.

Intruſt thy fortune to the pow'rs above:
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant
What their unerring wiſdom ſees thee want.
In goodneſs as in greatneſs they excel:
Ah! that we lov'd ourſelves but half ſo well.

DRYDEN.

What ſtate of life admits moſt happineſs, is uncertain; but that uncertainty ought to repreſs the petulance of compariſon, and ſilence the murmurs of diſcontent.

NUMB. 115. TUESDAY, *December* 11, 1753.

Scribimus indocti doctique. HOR.

All dare to write, who can or cannot read.

THEY who have attentively confidered the hiftory of mankind, know that every age has its peculiar character. At one time, no defire is felt but for military honours; every fummer affords battles and fieges, and the world is filled with ravage, bloodfhed, and devaftation: this fanguinary fury at length fubfides, and nations are divided into factions, by controverfies about points that will never be decided. Men then grow weary of debate and altercation, and apply themfelves to the arts of profit; trading companies are formed, manufactures improved, and navigation extended; and nothing is any longer thought on, but the increafe and prefervation of property, the artifices of getting money, and the pleafures of fpending it.

The prefent age, if we confider chiefly the ftate of our own country, may be ftiled with great propriety *The age of Authors*; for, perhaps, there never was a time in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profeffion and employment, were pofting with ardour fo general to the prefs. The province of writing was formerly left to thofe,

thofe, who by ftudy, or appearance of ftudy, were fuppofed to have gained knowledge unattainable by the bufy part of mankind; but in thefe enlightened days, every man is qualified to inftruct every other man: and he that beats the anvil, or guides the plough, not content with fupplying corporal neceffities, amufes himfelf in the hours of leifure with providing intellectual pleafures for his countrymen.

It may be obferved, that of this, as of other evils, complaints have been made by every generation: but though it may, perhaps, be true, that at all times more have been willing than have been able to write, yet there is no reafon for believing that the dogmatical legions of the prefent race were ever equalled in number by any former period; for fo widely is fpread the itch of literary praife, that almoft every man is an author, either in act or in purpofe; has either beftowed his favours on the publick, or witholds them, that they may be more feafonably offered, or made more worthy of acceptance.

In former times, the pen, like the fword, was confidered as configned by nature to the hands of men; the ladies contented themfelves with private virtues and domeftick excellence; and a female writer, like a female warrior, was confidered as a kind of eccentric being, that deviated, however illuftrioufly, from her due fphere of motion, and was, therefore, rather to be gazed at with wonder, than countenanced by imitation. But as the times paft are faid to have been a nation of Amazons, who drew the

bow

bow and wielded the battle-axe, formed encampments and wasted nations; the revolution of years has now produced a generation of Amazons of the pen, who with the spirit of their predecessors have set masculine tyranny at defiance, asserted their claim to the regions of science, and seem resolved to contest the usurpations of virility.

Some, indeed, there are of both sexes, who are authors only in desire, but have not yet attained the power of executing their intentions; whose performances have not arrived at bulk sufficient to form a volume, or who have not the confidence, however impatient of nameless obscurity, to solicit openly the assistance of the printer. Among these are the innumerable correspondents of publick papers, who are always offering assistance which no man will receive, and suggesting hints that are never taken, and who complain loudly of the perverseness and arrogance of authors, lament their insensibility of their own interest, and fill the coffee-houses with dark stories of performances by eminent hands, which have been offered and rejected.

To what cause this universal eagerness of writing can be properly ascribed, I have not yet been able to discover. It is said, that every art is propagated in proportion to the rewards conferred upon it; a position from which a stranger would naturally infer, that literature was now blessed with patronage far transcending the candour or munificence of the Augustine age, that the road to greatness was open to none but authors, and that by writing alone riches and honour were to be obtained.

But

But ſince it is true, that writers, like other competitors, are very little diſpoſed to favour one another, it is not to be expected, that at a time, when every man writes, any man will patronize; and accordingly, there is not one that I can recollect at preſent who profeſſes the leaſt regard for the votaries of ſcience, invites the addreſſes of learned men, or ſeems to hope for reputation from any pen but his own.

The cauſe, therefore, of this epidemical conſpiracy for the deſtruction of paper, muſt remain a ſecret: nor can I diſcover, whether we owe it to the influences of the conſtellations, or the intemperature of ſeaſons: whether the long continuance of the wind at any ſingle point, or intoxicating vapours exhaled from the earth, have turned our nobles and our peaſants, our ſoldiers and traders, our men and women, all into wits, philoſophers, and writers.

It is, indeed, of more importance to ſearch out the cure than the cauſe of this intellectual malady; and he would deſerve well of his country, who, inſtead of amuſing himſelf with conjectural ſpeculations, ſhould find means of perſuading the peer to inſpect his ſteward's accounts, or repair the rural manſion of his anceſtors, who could replace the tradeſman behind his counter, and ſend back the farmer to the mattock and the flail.

General irregularities are known in time to remedy themſelves. By the conſtitution of ancient *Ægypt*, the prieſthood was continually increaſing, till at length there was no people beſide themſelves: the

eſtabliſhment

eſtabliſhment was then diſſolved, and the number of prieſts was reduced and limited. Thus among us, writers will, perhaps, be multiplied, till no readers will be found, and then the ambition of writing muſt neceſſarily ceaſe.

But as it will be long before the cure is thus gradually effected, and the evil ſhould be ſtopped, if it be poſſible, before it riſes to ſo great a height, I could wiſh that both ſexes would fix their thoughts upon ſome ſalutary conſiderations, which might repreſs their ardour for that reputation which not one of many thouſands is fated to obtain.

Let it be deeply impreſſed and frequently recollected, that he who has not obtained the proper qualifications of an author, can have no excuſe for the arrogance of writing, but the power of imparting to mankind ſomething neceſſary to be known. A man uneducated or unlettered may ſometimes ſtart a uſeful thought, or make a lucky diſcovery, or obtain by chance ſome ſecret of nature, or ſome intelligence of facts, of which the moſt enlightened mind may be ignorant, and which it is better to reveal, though by a rude and unſkilful communication, than to loſe for ever by ſuppreſſing it.

But few will be juſtified by this plea; for of the innumerable books and pamphlets that have overflowed the nation, ſcarce one has made any addition to real knowledge, or contained more than a tranſpoſition of common ſentiments and a repetition of common phraſes.

It will be naturally inquired, when the man who feels an inclination to write, may venture to ſuppoſe

himſelf properly qualified; and, ſince every man is inclined to think well of his own intellect, by what teſt he may try his abilities, without hazarding the contempt or reſentment of the publick.

The firſt qualification of a writer, is a perfect knowledge of the ſubject which he undertakes to treat; ſince we cannot teach what we do not know, nor can properly undertake to inſtruct others while we are ourſelves in want of inſtruction. The next requiſite is, that he be maſter of the language in which he delivers his ſentiments; if he treats of ſcience and demonſtration, that he has attained a ſtyle clear, pure, nervous, and expreſſive; if his topicks be probable and perſuaſory, that he be able to recommend them by the ſuperaddition of elegance and imagery, to diſplay the colours of varied diction, and pour forth the muſick of modulated periods.

If it be again inquired, upon what principles any man ſhall conclude that he wants theſe powers, it may be readily anſwered, that no end is attained but by the proper means; he only can rationally preſume that he underſtands a ſubject, who has read and compared the writers that have hitherto diſcuſſed it, familiarized their arguments to himſelf by long meditation, conſulted the foundations of different ſyſtems, and ſeparated truth from error by a rigorous examination.

In like manner, he only has a right to ſuppoſe that he can expreſs his thoughts, whatever they are, with perſpicuity or elegance, who has carefully peruſed the beſt authors, accurately noted their diverſities of ſtyle, diligently ſelected the beſt modes of diction, and familiarized them by long habits of attentive practice.

No man is a rhetorician or philosopher by chance. He who knows that he undertakes to write on questions which he has never studied, may without hesitation determine, that he is about to waste his own time and that of his reader, and expose himself to the derision of those whom he aspires to instruct: he that without forming his style by the study of the best models, hastens to obtrude his compositions on the publick, may be certain, that whatever hope or flattery may suggest, he shall shock the learned ear with barbarisms, and contribute, wherever his work shall be received, to the depravation of taste and the corruption of language.

NUMB. 119. TUESDAY, *December* 25, 1753.

Latiùs regnes, avidum domando
Spiritum, quàm si Lybiam remotis
Gadibus jungas, et uterque Pœnus
Serviat uni. HOR.

By virtue's precepts to controul
The thirsty cravings of the soul,
Is over wider realms to reign
Unenvied monarch, than if Spain
You could to distant Lybia join,
And both the Carthages were thine. FRANCIS.

WHEN *Socrates* was asked, "which of mortal "men was to be accounted nearest to the "*gods* in happiness?" he answered, "that man, who "is in want of the fewest things."

In this answer, *Socrates* left it to be guessed by his auditors, whether, by the exemption from want which was to constitute happiness, he meant amplitude of possessions or contraction of desire. And, indeed, there is so little difference between them, that *Alexander* the Great confessed the inhabitant of a tub the next man to the master of the world; and left a declaration to future ages, that if he was not *Alexander* he should wish to be *Diogenes*.

These two states, however, though they resemble each other in their consequence, differ widely with respect to the facility with which they may be attained. To make great acquisitions can happen to

very few; and in the uncertainty of human affairs, to many it will be incident to labour without reward, and to lose what they already possess by endeavours to make it more: some will always want abilities, and others opportunities to accumulate wealth. It is therefore happy, that nature has allowed us a more certain and easy road to plenty; every man may grow rich by contracting his wishes, and by quiet acquiescence in what has been given him supply the absence of more.

Yet so far is almost every man from emulating the happiness of the gods, by any other means than grasping at their power, that it seems to be the great business of life to create wants as fast as they are satisfied. It has been long observed by moralists, that every man squanders or loses a great part of that life, of which every man knows and deplores the shortness: and it may be remarked with equal justness, that though every man laments his own insufficiency to his happiness, and knows himself a necessitous and precarious being, incessantly soliciting the assistance of others, and feeling wants which his own art or strength cannot supply; yet there is no man, who does not, by the superaddition of unnatural cares, render himself still more dependent; who does not create an artificial poverty, and suffer himself to feel pain for the want of that, of which, when it is gained, he can have no enjoyment.

It must, indeed, be allowed, that as we lose part of our time because it steals away silent and invisible, and many an hour is passed before we recollect that it is passing; so unnatural desires insinuate themselves unobserved into the mind, and we do not perceive

that

that they are gaining upon us, till the pain which they give us awakens us to notice. No man is sufficiently vigilant to take account of every minute of his life, or to watch every motion of his heart. Much of our time likewise is sacrificed to custom; we trifle, because we see others trifle: in the same manner we catch from example the contagion of desire; we see all about us busied in pursuit of imaginary good, and begin to bustle in the same chace, lest greater activity should triumph over us.

It is true, that to man, as a member of society, many things become necessary, which, perhaps, in a state of nature are superfluous; and that many things, not absolutely necessary, are yet so useful and convenient, that they cannot easily be spared. I will make yet a more ample and liberal concession. In opulent states and regular governments, the temptations to wealth and rank, and to the distinctions that follow them, are such as no force of understanding finds it easy to resist.

If, therefore, I saw the quiet of life disturbed only by endeavours after wealth and honour; by solicitude, which the world, whether justly or not, considered as important; I should scarcely have had courage to inculcate any precepts of moderation and forbearance. He that is engaged in a pursuit, in which all mankind profess to be his rivals, is supported by the authority of all mankind in the prosecution of his design, and will, therefore, scarcely stop to hear the lectures of a solitary philosopher. Nor am I certain, that the accumulation of honest gain ought to be hindered, or the ambition of just honours always to be repressed. Whatever can enable the pos-

sessor to confer any benefit upon others, may be desired upon virtuous principles; and we ought not too rashly to accuse any man of intending to confine the influence of his acquisitions to himself.

But if we look round upon mankind, whom shall we find among those that fortune permits to form their own manners, that is not tormenting himself with a wish for something, of which all the pleasure and all the benefit will cease at the moment of attainment? One man is beggaring his posterity to build a house, which when finished he never will inhabit; another is levelling mountains to open a prospect, which, when he has once enjoyed it, he can enjoy no more; another is painting ceilings, carving wainscot, and filling his apartments with costly furniture, only that some neighbouring house may not be richer or finer than his own.

That splendor and elegance are not desirable, I am not so abstracted from life as to inculcate; but if we inquire closely into the reason for which they are esteemed, we shall find them valued principally as evidences of wealth. Nothing, therefore, can shew greater depravity of understanding, than to delight in the shew when the reality is wanting; or voluntarily to become poor, that strangers may for a time imagine us to be rich.

But there are yet minuter objects and more trifling anxieties. Men may be found, who are kept from sleep by the want of a shell particularly variegated! who are wasting their lives, in stratagems to obtain a book in a language which they do not understand; who pine with envy at the flowers of another man's parterre; who hover like vultures round the owner of

a fossil,

a foſſil, in hopes to plunder his cabinet at his death; and who would not much regret to ſee a ſtreet in flames, if a box of medals might be ſcattered in the tumult.

He that imagines me to ſpeak of theſe ſages in terms exaggerated and hyperbolical, has converſed but little with the race of virtuoſos. A ſlight acquaintance with their ſtudies, and a few viſits to their aſſemblies, would inform him, that nothing is ſo worthleſs, but that prejudice and caprice can give it value; nor any thing of ſo little uſe, but that by indulging an idle competition or unreaſonable pride, a man may make it to himſelf one of the neceſſaries of life.

Deſires like theſe, I may ſurely, without incurring the cenſure of moroſeneſs, adviſe every man to repel when they invade his mind; or if he admits them, never to allow them any greater influence, than is neceſſary to give petty employments the power of pleaſing, and diverſify the day with ſlight amuſements.

An ardent wiſh, whatever be its object, will always be able to interrupt tranquillity. What we believe ourſelves to want, torments us not in proportion to its real value, but according to the eſtimation by which we have rated it in our own minds: in ſome diſeaſes, the patient has been obſerved to long for food, which ſcarce any extremity of hunger would in health have compelled him to ſwallow; but while his organs were thus depraved the craving was irreſiſtible, nor could any reſt be obtained till it was appeaſed by compliance. Of the ſame nature are the irregular appetites of the mind; though they are often excited by trifles, they are equally diſquieting with real wants: the *Roman*, who wept at the death of his

lamprey, felt the ſame degree of ſorrow that extorts tears on other occaſions.

Inordinate deſires, of whatever kind, ought to be repreſſed upon yet a higher conſideration; they muſt be conſidered as enemies not only to happineſs but to virtue. There are men among thoſe commonly reckoned the learned and the wiſe, who ſpare no ſtratagems to remove a competitor at an auction, who will ſink the price of a rarity at the expence of truth, and whom it is not ſafe to truſt alone in a library or cabinet. Theſe are faults, which the fraternity ſeem to look upon as jocular miſchiefs, or to think excuſed by the violence of the temptation: but I ſhall always fear that he, who accuſtoms himſelf to fraud in little things, wants only opportunity to practiſe it in greater; "he that has hardened him-"ſelf by killing a ſheep," ſays *Pythagoras*, "will "with leſs reluctance ſhed the blood of a man."

To prize every thing according to its *real* uſe, ought to be the aim of a rational being. There are few things which can much conduce to happineſs, and, therefore, few things to be ardently deſired. He that looks upon the buſineſs and buſtle of the world, with the philoſophy with which *Socrates* ſurveyed the fair at *Athens*, will turn away at laſt with his exclamation, "How many things are here which "I do not want!"

NUMB. 120. SATURDAY, *December* 29, 1753.

> ——— *Ultima ſemper*
> *Expectanda dies homini, dicique beatus*
> *Ante obitum nemo ſupremaque funera debet.* OVID.
>
> But no frail man, however great or high,
> Can be concluded bleſt before he die. ADDISON.

THE numerous miſeries of human life have extorted in all ages an univerſal complaint. The wiſeſt of men terminated all his experiments in ſearch of happineſs, by the mournful confeſſion, that "all is vanity;" and the ancient patriarchs lamented, that "the days of their pilgrimage were "few and evil."

There is, indeed, no topick on which it is more ſuperfluous to accumulate authorities, nor any aſſertion of which our own eyes will more eaſily diſcover, or our ſenſations more frequently impreſs the truth, than, that miſery is the lot of man, that our preſent ſtate is a ſtate of danger and infelicity.

When we take the moſt diſtant proſpect of life, what does it preſent us but a chaos of unhappineſs, a confuſed and tumultuous ſcene of labour and conteſt, diſappointment and defeat? If we view paſt ages in the reflection of hiſtory, what do they offer to our meditation but crimes and calamities? One year is diſtinguiſhed by a famine, another by an earthquake;

 kingdoms

kingdoms are made desolate, sometimes by wars, and sometimes by pestilence; the peace of the world is interrupted at one time by the caprices of a tyrant, at another by the rage of a conqueror. The memory is stored only with vicissitudes of evil; and the happiness, such as it is, of one part of mankind, is found to arise commonly from sanguinary success, from victories which confer upon them the power, not so much of improving life by any new enjoyment, as of inflicting misery on others, and gratifying their own pride by comparative greatness.

But by him that examines life with a more close attention, the happiness of the world will be found still less than it appears. In some intervals of publick prosperity, or to use terms more proper, in some intermissions of calamity, a general diffusion of happiness may seem to overspread a people; all is triumph and exultation, jollity and plenty; there are no publick fears and dangers, and "no complain- "ings in the streets." But the condition of individuals is very little mended by this general calm: pain and malice and discontent still continue their havock; the silent depredation goes incessantly forward; and the grave continues to be filled by the victims of sorrow.

He that enters a gay assembly, beholds the cheerfulness displayed in every countenance, and finds all sitting vacant and disengaged, with no other attention than to give or to receive pleasure; would naturally imagine, that he had reached at last the metropolis of felicity, the place sacred to gladness of heart,

heart, from whence all fear and anxiety were irreversibly excluded. Such, indeed, we may often find to be the opinion of thofe, who from a lower ftation look up to the pomp and gaiety which they cannot reach: but who is there of thofe who frequent thefe luxurious affemblies, that will not confefs his own uneafinefs, or cannot recount the vexations and diftreffes that prey upon the lives of his gay companions?

The world, in its beft ftate, is nothing more than a larger affembly of beings, combining to counterfeit happinefs which they do not feel, employing every art and contrivance to embellifh life, and to hide their real condition from the eyes of one another.

The fpecies of happinefs moft obvious to the obfervation of others, is that which depends upon the goods of fortune; yet even this is often fictitious. There is in the world more poverty than is generally imagined; not only becaufe many whofe poffeffions are large have defires ftill larger, and many meafure their wants by the gratifications which others enjoy: but great numbers are preffed by real neceffities which it is their chief ambition to conceal, and are forced to purchafe the appearance of competence and cheerfulnefs at the expence of many comforts and conveniencies of life.

Many, however, are confeffedly rich, and many more are fufficiently removed from all danger of real poverty: but it has been long ago remarked, that money cannot purchafe quiet; the higheft of mankind can promife themfelves no exemption from

that discord or suspicion, by which the sweetness of domestick retirement is destroyed; and must always be even more exposed, in the same degree as they are elevated above others, to the treachery of dependents, the calumny of defamers, and the violence of opponents.

Affliction is inseparable from our present state; it adheres to all the inhabitants of this world, in different proportions indeed, but with an allotment which seems very little regulated by our own conduct. It has been the boast of some swelling moralists, that every man's fortune was in his own power, that prudence supplied the place of all other divinities, and that happiness is the unfailing consequence of virtue. But, surely, the quiver of Omnipotence is stored with arrows, against which the shield of human virtue, however adamantine it has been boasted, is held up in vain: we do not always suffer by our crimes; we are not always protected by our innocence.

A good man is by no means exempt from the danger of suffering by the crimes of others; even his goodness may raise him enemies of implacable malice and restless perseverance: the good man has never been warranted by Heaven from the treachery of friends, the disobedience of children, or the dishonesty of a wife; he may see his cares made useless by profusion, his instructions defeated by perverseness, and his kindness rejected by ingratitude; he may languish under the infamy of false accusations, or perish reproachfully by an unjust sentence.

A good

A good man is ſubject, like other mortals, to all the influences of natural evil; his harveſt is not ſpared by the tempeſt, nor his cattle by the murrain; his houſe flames like others in a conflagration; nor have his ſhips any peculiar power of reſiſting hurricanes: his mind, however elevated, inhabits a body ſubject to innumerable caſualties, of which he muſt always ſhare the dangers and the pains; he bears about him the ſeeds of diſeaſe, and may linger away a great part of his life under the tortures of the gout or ſtone; at one time groaning with inſufferable anguiſh, at another diſſolved in liſtleſſneſs and languor.

From this general and indiſcriminate diſtribution of miſery, the moraliſts have always derived one of their ſtrongeſt moral arguments for a future ſtate; for ſince the common events of the preſent life happen alike to the good and bad, it follows from the juſtice of the Supreme Being, that there muſt be another ſtate of exiſtence, in which a juſt retribution ſhall be made, and every man ſhall be happy and miſerable according to his works.

The miſeries of life may, perhaps, afford ſome proof of a future ſtate, compared as well with the mercy as the juſtice of God. It is ſcarcely to be imagined, that Infinite Benevolence would create a being capable of enjoying ſo much more than is here to be enjoyed, and qualified by nature to prolong pain by remembrance, and anticipate it by terror, if he was not deſigned for ſomething nobler and better than a ſtate, in which

many of his faculties can ſerve only for his torment; in which he is to be importuned by deſires, that never can be ſatisfied, to feel many evils which he had no power to avoid, and to fear many which he ſhall never feel: there will ſurely come a time, when every capacity of happineſs ſhall be filled, and none ſhall be wretched but by his own fault.

In the mean time, it is by affliction chiefly that the heart of man is purified, and that the thoughts are fixed upon a better ſtate. Proſperity, allayed and imperfect as it is, has power to intoxicate the imagination, to fix the mind upon the preſent ſcene, to produce confidence and elation, and to make him who enjoys affluence and honours forget the hand by which they were beſtowed. It is ſeldom that we are otherwiſe, than by affliction, awakened to a ſenſe of our own imbecillity, or taught to know how little all our acquiſitions can conduce to ſafety or to quiet; and how juſtly we may aſcribe to the ſuperintendence of a higher Power, thoſe bleſſings which in the wantonneſs of ſucceſs we conſidered as the attainments of our policy or courage.

Nothing confers ſo much ability to reſiſt the temptations that perpetually ſurround us, as an habitual conſideration of the ſhortneſs of life, and the uncertainty of thoſe pleaſures that ſolicit our purſuit; and this conſideration can be inculcated only by affliction. "O Death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that lives at eaſe in his poſſeſſions!" If our preſent ſtate were

one continued ſucceſſion of delights, or one uniform flow of calmneſs and tranquillity, we ſhould never willingly think upon its end; death would then ſurely ſurpriſe us as "a thief in the night;" and our taſk of duty would remain unfiniſhed, till "the night came "when no man can work."

While affliction thus prepares us for felicity, we may conſole ourſelves under its preſſures, by remembering, that they are no particular marks of divine diſpleaſure; ſince all the diſtreſſes of perſecution have been ſuffered by thoſe, "of whom the world was not wor-"thy; and the Redeemer of Mankind himſelf was "a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief."

Numb. 126. Saturday, *January* 19, 1754.

——— Steriles nec legit arenas
Ut caneret paucis merſitque hoc pulvere verum. Lucan.

Canſt thou believe the vaſt eternal Mind
Was e'er to Syrts and Lybian ſands confin'd?
That he would chuſe this waſte, this barren ground,
To teach the thin inhabitants around,
And leave his truth in wilds and deſarts drown'd?

THERE has always prevailed among that part of mankind that addict their minds to ſpeculation, a propenſity to talk much of the delights of retirement; and ſome of the moſt pleaſing

ing compoſitions produced in every age contain deſcriptions of the peace and happineſs of a country life.

I know not whether thoſe who thus ambitiouſly repeat the praiſes of ſolitude, have always conſidered, how much they depreciate mankind by declaring, that whatever is excellent or deſirable is to be obtained by departing from them; that the aſſiſtance which we may derive from one another, is not equivalent to the evils which we have to fear; that the kindneſs of a few is overbalanced by the malice of many; and that the protection of ſociety is too dearly purchaſed, by encountering its dangers and enduring its oppreſſions.

Theſe ſpecious repreſentations of ſolitary happineſs, however opprobrious to human nature, have ſo far ſpread their influence over the world, that almoſt every man delights his imagination with the hopes of obtaining ſome time an opportunity of retreat. Many, indeed, who enjoy retreat only in imagination, content themſelves with believing, that another year will tranſport them to rural tranquillity, and die while they talk of doing what, if they had lived longer, they would never have done. But many likewiſe there are, either of greater reſolution or more credulity, who in earneſt try the ſtate which they have been taught to think thus ſecure from cares and dangers; and retire to privacy, either that they may improve their happineſs, increaſe their knowledge, or exalt their virtue.

The greater part of the admirers of ſolitude, as of all other claſſes of mankind, have no higher or

remoter view, than the preſent gratification of their paſſions. Of theſe ſome, haughty and impetuous, fly from ſociety only becauſe they cannot bear to repay to others the regard which themſelves exact; and think no ſtate of life eligible, but that which places them out of the reach of cenſure or controul, and affords them opportunities of living in a perpetual compliance with their own inclinations, without the neceſſity of regulating their actions by any other man's convenience or opinion.

There are others of minds more delicate and tender, eaſily offended by every deviation from rectitude, ſoon diſguſted by ignorance or impertinence, and always expecting from the converſation of mankind more elegance, purity, and truth, than the mingled maſs of life will eaſily afford. Such men are in haſte to retire from groſſneſs, falſehood, and brutality; and hope to find in private habitations at leaſt a negative felicity, an exemption from the ſhocks and perturbations with which publick ſcenes are continually diſtreſſing them.

To neither of theſe votaries will ſolitude afford that content, which ſhe has been taught ſo laviſhly to promiſe. The man of arrogance will quickly diſcover, that by eſcaping from his opponents he has loſt his flatterers, that greatneſs is nothing where it is not ſeen, and power nothing where it cannot be felt: and he, whoſe faculties are employed in too cloſe an obſervation of failings and defects, will find his condition very little mended by transferring his attention from others to himſelf; he will probably ſoon come back in queſt of new objects, and be glad to keep his

captiousness employed on any character rather than his own.

Others are seduced into solitude merely by the authority of great names, and expect to find those charms in tranquillity which have allured statesmen and conquerors to the shades: these likewise are apt to wonder at their disappointment, for want of considering, that those whom they aspire to imitate carried with them to their country seats minds full fraught with subjects of reflection, the consciousness of great merit, the memory of illustrious actions, the knowledge of important events, and the seeds of mighty designs to be ripened by future meditation. Solitude was to such men a release from fatigue, and an opportunity of usefulness. But what can retirement confer upon him, who having done nothing, can receive no support from his own importance, who having known nothing can find no entertainment in reviewing the past, and who intending nothing can form no hopes from prospects of the future? He can, surely, take no wiser course than that of losing himself again in the crowd, and filling the vacuities of his mind with the news of the day.

Others consider solitude as the parent of philosophy, and retire in expectation of greater intimacies with science, as *Numa* repaired to the groves when he conferred with *Egeria*. These men have not always reason to repent. Some studies require a continued prosecution of the same train of thought, such as is too often interrupted by the petty avocations of common life: sometimes, likewise, it is necessary, that a multiplicity of objects be at once

present

present to the mind; and every thing, therefore, must be kept at a distance, which may perplex the memory, or dissipate the attention.

But though learning may be conferred by solitude, its application must be attained by general converse. He has learned to no purpose, that is not able to teach; and he will always teach unsuccessfully, who cannot recommend his sentiments by his diction or address.

Even the acquisition of knowledge is often much facilitated by the advantages of society: he that never compares his notions with those of others, readily acquiesces in his first thoughts, and very seldom discovers the objections which may be raised against his opinions; he, therefore, often thinks himself in possession of truth, when he is only fondling an error long since exploded. He that has neither companions nor rivals in his studies, will always applaud his own progress, and think highly of his performances, because he knows not that others have equalled or excelled him. And I am afraid it may be added, that the student who withdraws himself from the world, will soon feel that ardour extinguished which praise or emulation had enkindled, and take the advantage of secrecy to sleep, rather than to labour.

There remains yet another set of recluses, whose intention intitles them to higher respect, and whose motives deserve a more serious consideration. These retire from the world, not merely to bask in ease or gratify curiosity; but that being disengaged from common cares, they may employ more time in the duties of religion: that they may regulate their actions with

ſtricter vigilance, and purify their thoughts by more frequent meditation.

To men thus elevated above the miſts of mortality, I am far from preſuming myſelf qualified to give directions. On him that appears "to paſs through "things temporary," with no other care than "not "to loſe finally the things eternal," I look with ſuch veneration as inclines me to approve his conduct in the whole, without a minute examination of its parts; yet I could never forbear to wiſh, that while vice is every day multiplying ſeducements, and ſtalking forth with more hardened effrontery, virtue would not withdraw the influence of her preſence, or forbear to aſſert her natural dignity by open and undaunted perſeverance in the right. Piety practiſed in ſolitude, like the flower that blooms in the deſart, may give its fragrance to the winds of Heaven, and delight thoſe unbodied ſpirits that ſurvey the works of God and the actions of men; but it beſtows no aſſiſtance upon earthly beings, and however free from taints of impurity, yet wants the ſacred ſplendor of beneficence.

Our Maker, who, though he gave us ſuch varieties of temper and ſuch difference of powers, yet deſigned us all for happineſs, undoubtedly intended, that we ſhould obtain that happineſs by different means. Some are unable to reſiſt the temptations of importunity, or the impetuoſity of their own paſſions incited by the force of preſent temptations: of theſe it is undoubtedly the duty to fly from enemies which they cannot conquer, and to cultivate, in the calm of ſolitude, that virtue which is too tender to endure the

the tempeſts of publick life. But there are others, whoſe paſſions grow more ſtrong and irregular in privacy; and who cannot maintain an uniform tenor of virtue, but by expoſing their manners to the publick eye, and aſſiſting the admonitions of conſcience with the fear of infamy: for ſuch it is dangerous to exclude all witneſſes of their conduct, till they have formed ſtrong habits of virtue, and weakened their paſſions by frequent victories. But there is a higher order of men ſo inſpired with ardour, and ſo fortified with reſolution, that the world paſſes before them without influence or regard: theſe ought to conſider themſelves as appointed the guardians of mankind: they are placed in an evil world, to exhibit publick examples of good life; and may be ſaid, when they withdraw to ſolitude, to deſert the ſtation which Providence aſſigned them.

NUMB. 131. TUESDAY, *February* 5, 1754.

——— *Misce*
Ergo aliquid nostris de moribus. JUVENAL.

And mingle something of our times to please.
DRYDEN Jun.

FONTENELLE, in his panegyrick on Sir *Isaac Newton*, closes a long enumeration of that great philosopher's virtues and attainments, with an observation, that "he was not distinguished from other "men, by any singularity either natural or affected."

It is an eminent instance of *Newton*'s superiority to the rest of mankind, that he was able to separate knowledge from those weaknesses by which knowledge is generally disgraced; that he was able to excel in science and wisdom, without purchasing them by the neglect of little things; and that he stood alone, merely because he had left the rest of mankind behind him, not because he deviated from the beaten track.

Whoever, after the example of *Plutarch*, should compare the lives of illustrious men, might set this part of *Newton*'s character to view with great advantage, by opposing it to that of *Bacon*, perhaps the only man of later ages, who has any pretensions to dispute with him the palm of genius or science.

Bacon,

Bacon, after he had added to a long and careful contemplation of almoſt every other object of knowledge a curious inſpection into common life, and after having ſurveyed nature as a philoſopher, had examined "men's buſineſs and boſoms" as a ſtateſman; yet failed ſo much in the conduct of domeſtick affairs, that, in the moſt lucrative poſt to which a great and wealthy kingdom could advance him, he felt all the miſeries of diſtreſsful poverty, and committed all the crimes to which poverty incites. Such were at once his negligence and rapacity, that, as it is ſaid, he would gain by unworthy practices that money, which, when ſo acquired, his ſervants might ſteal from one end of the table, while he ſat ſtudious and abſtracted at the other.

As ſcarcely any man has reached the excellence, very few have ſunk to the weakneſs of *Bacon*: but almoſt all the ſtudious tribe, as they obtain any participation of his knowledge, feel likewiſe ſome contagion of his defects; and obſtruct the veneration which learning would procure, by follies greater or leſs, to which only learning could betray them.

It has been formerly remarked by *The Guardian*, that the world puniſhes with too great ſeverity the error of thoſe, who imagine that the ignorance of little things may be compenſated by the knowledge of great; for ſo it is, that as more can detect petty failings than can diſtinguiſh or eſteem great qualifications, and as mankind is in general more eaſily diſpoſed to cenſure than to admiration, contempt is often incurred by ſlight miſtakes, which real virtue or uſefulneſs cannot counterbalance.

Yet ſuch miſtakes and inadvertencies, it is not eaſy for a man deeply immerſed in ſtudy to avoid; no man can become qualified for the common intercourſes of life, by private meditation; the manners of the world are not a regular ſyſtem, planned by philoſophers upon ſettled principles, in which every cauſe has a congruous effect, and one part has a juſt reference to another. Of the faſhions prevalent in every country, a few have ariſen, perhaps, from particular temperatures of the climate; a few more from the conſtitution of the government; but the greater part have grown up by chance; been ſtarted by caprice, been contrived by affectation, or borrowed without any juſt motives of choice from other countries.

Of all theſe, the ſavage that hunts his prey upon the mountains, and the ſage that ſpeculates in his cloſet, muſt neceſſarily live in equal ignorance; yet by the obſervation of theſe trifles it is, that the ranks of mankind are kept in order, that the addreſs of one to another is regulated, and the general buſineſs of the world carried on with facility and method.

Theſe things, therefore, though ſmall in themſelves, become great by their frequency; and he very much miſtakes his own intereſt, who, to the unavoidable unſkilfulneſs of abſtraction and retirement, adds a voluntary neglect of common forms, and increaſes the diſadvantages of a ſtudious courſe of life by an arrogant contempt of thoſe practices, by which others endeavour to gain favour and multiply friendſhips.

A real and interior diſdain of faſhion and ceremony, is, indeed, not very often to be found: much

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the greater part of thoſe who pretend to laugh at foppery and formality, ſecretly wiſh to have poſſeſſed thoſe qualifications which they pretend to deſpiſe; and becauſe they find it difficult to waſh away the tincture which they have ſo deeply imbibed, endeavour to harden themſelves in a ſullen approbation of their own colour. Neutrality is a ſtate, into which the buſy paſſions of man cannot eaſily ſubſide; and he who is in danger of the pangs of envy, is generally forced to recreate his imagination with an effort of comfort.

Some, however, may be found, who, ſupported by the conſciouſneſs of great abilities, and elevated by a long courſe of reputation and applauſe, voluntarily conſign themſelves to ſingularity, affect to croſs the roads of life becauſe they know that they ſhall not be juſtled, and indulge a boundleſs gratification of will becauſe they perceive that they ſhall be quietly obeyed. Men of this kind are generally known by the name of *Humouriſts*, an appellation by which he that has obtained it, and can be contented to keep it, is ſet free at once from the ſhackles of faſhion: and can go in or out, ſit or ſtand, be talkative or ſilent, gloomy or merry, advance abſurdities or oppoſe demonſtration, without any other reprehenſion from mankind, than that it is his way, that he is an odd fellow, and muſt be let alone.

This ſeems to many an eaſy paſſport through the various factions of mankind; and thoſe on whom it is beſtowed, appear too frequently to conſider the patience with which their caprices are ſuffered as an undoubted evidence of their own importance, of a genius to which ſubmiſſion is univerſally paid, and

whoſe

whoſe irregularities are only conſidered as conſequences of its vigour. Theſe peculiarities, however, are always found to ſpot a character, though they may not totally obſcure it; and he who expects from mankind, that they ſhould give up eſtabliſhed cuſtoms in compliance with his ſingle will, and exacts that deference which he does not pay, may be endured, but can never be approved.

Singularity is, I think, in its own nature univerſally and invariably diſpleaſing. In whatever reſpect a man differs from others, he muſt be conſidered by them as either worſe or better: by being better, it is well known that a man gains admiration oftener than love, ſince all approbation of his practice muſt neceſſarily condemn him that gives it; and though a man often pleaſes by inferiority, there are few who deſire to give ſuch pleaſure. Yet the truth is, that ſingularity is almoſt always regarded as a brand of ſlight reproach; and where it is aſſociated with acknowledged merit, ſerves as an abatement or an allay of excellence, by which weak eyes are reconciled to its luſtre, and by which, though kindneſs is not gained, at leaſt envy is averted.

But let no man be in haſte to conclude his own merit ſo great or conſpicuous, as to require or juſtify ſingularity: it is as hazardous for a moderate underſtanding to uſurp the prerogatives of genius, as for a common form to play over the airs of unconteſted beauty. The pride of men will not patiently endure to ſee one, whoſe underſtanding or attainments are but level with their own, break the rules by which they have conſented to be bound, or forſake the direction which they ſubmiſſively follow. All viola-

tion of eſtabliſhed practice implies in its own nature a rejection of the common opinion, a defiance of common cenſure, and an appeal from general laws to private judgment: he, therefore, who differs from others without apparent advantage, ought not to be angry if his arrogance is puniſhed with ridicule; if thoſe, whoſe example he ſuperciliouſly overlooks, point him out to deriſion, and hoot him back again into the common road.

The pride of ſingularity is often exerted in little things, where right and wrong are indeterminable, and where, therefore, vanity is without excuſe. But there are occaſions on which it is noble to dare to ſtand alone. To be pious among infidels, to be diſintereſted in a time of general venality, to lead a life of virtue and reaſon in the midſt of ſenſualiſts, is a proof of a mind intent on nobler things than the praiſe or blame of men, of a ſoul fixed in the contemplation of the higheſt good, and ſuperior to the tyranny of cuſtom and example.

In moral and religious queſtions only, a wiſe man will hold no conſultations with faſhion, becauſe theſe duties are conſtant and immutable, and depend not on the notions of men, but the commands of Heaven: yet even of theſe, the external mode is to be in ſome meaſure regulated by the prevailing taſte of the age in which we live; for he is certainly no friend to virtue, who neglects to give it any lawful attraction, or ſuffers it to deceive the eye or alienate the affections for want of innocent compliance with faſhionable decorations.

It is yet remembered of the learned and pious *Nelſon*, that he was remarkably elegant in his manners,

ners, and ſplendid in his dreſs. He knew, that the eminence o his character drew many eyes upon him; and he was careful not to drive the young or the gay away from religion, by repreſenting it as an enemy to any diſtinction or enjoyment in which human nature may innocently delight.

In this cenſure of ſingularity, I have, therefore, no intention to ſubject reaſon or conſcience to cuſtom or example. To comply with the notions and practices of mankind, is in ſome degree the duty of a ſocial being; becauſe by compliance only he can pleaſe, and by pleaſing only he can become uſeful: but as the end is not to be loſt for the ſake of the means, we are not to give up virtue to complaiſance; for the end of complaiſance is only to gain the kindneſs of our fellow-beings, whoſe kindneſs is deſirable only as inſtrumental to happineſs, and happineſs muſt be always loſt by departure from virtue.

NUMB. 137. TUESDAY, *February* 26, 1754.

Τί δ' ἔρεξα. PYTH.

What have I been doing?

AS man is a being very ſparingly furniſhed with the power of preſcience, he can provide for the future only by conſidering the paſt; and as futurity is all in which he has any real intereſt, he ought very diligently to uſe the only means by which he can be enabled to enjoy it, and frequently to revolve the experiments which he has hitherto made upon life, that he may gain wiſdom from his miſtakes, and caution from his miſcarriages.

Though I do not ſo exactly conform to the precepts of *Pythagoras*, as to practiſe every night this ſolemn recollection, yet I am not ſo loſt in diſſipation as wholly to omit it; nor can I forbear ſometimes to enquire of myſelf, in what employment my life has paſſed away. Much of my time has ſunk into nothing, and left no trace by which it can be diſtinguiſhed; and of this I now only know, that it was once in my power, and might once have been improved.

Of other parts of life memory can give ſome account; at ſome hours I have been gay, and at others ſerious; I have ſometimes mingled in converſation, and ſometimes meditated in ſolitude; one day has

been

been ſpent in conſulting the ancient ſages, and another in writing *Adventurers*.

At the concluſion of any undertaking, it is uſual to compute the loſs and profit. As I ſhall ſoon ceaſe to write *Adventurers*, I could not forbear lately to conſider what has been the conſequence of my labours; and whether I am to reckon the hours laid out in theſe compoſitions, as applied to a good and laudable purpoſe, or ſuffered to fume away in uſeleſs evaporations.

That I have intended well, I have the atteſtation of my own heart: but good intentions may be fruſtrated when they are executed without ſuitable ſkill, or directed to an end unattainable in itſelf.

Some there are, who leave writers very little room for ſelf-congratulation; ſome who affirm, that books have no influence upon the publick, that no age was ever made better by its authors, and that to call upon mankind to correct their manners, is like *Xerxes*, to ſcourge the wind, or ſhackle the torrent.

This opinion they pretend to ſupport by unfailing experience. The world is full of fraud and corruption, rapine or malignity; intereſt is the ruling motive of mankind, and every one is endeavouring to increaſe his own ſtores of happineſs by perpetual accumulation, without reflecting upon the numbers whom his ſuperfluity condemns to want: in this ſtate of things a book of morality is publiſhed, in which charity and benevolence are ſtrongly enforced; and it is proved beyond oppoſition, that men are happy in proportion as they are virtuous, and rich as they are liberal. The book is applauded, and the author

thor is preferred; he imagines his applause deserved, and receives less pleasure from the acquisition of reward than the consciousness of merit. Let us look again upon mankind: interest is still the ruling motive, and the world is yet full of fraud and corruption, malevolence and rapine.

The difficulty of confuting this assertion arises merely from its generality and comprehension: to overthrow it by a detail of distinct facts, requires a wider survey of the world than human eyes can take; the progress of reformation is gradual and silent, as the extension of evening shadows; we know that they were short at noon, and are long at sun-set, but our senses were not able to discern their increase: we know of every civil nation, that it was once savage, and how was it reclaimed but by a precept and admonition?

Mankind are universally corrupt, but corrupt in different degrees; as they are universally ignorant, yet with greater or less irradiations of knowledge. How has knowledge or virtue been increased and preserved in one place beyond another, but by diligent inculcation and rational inforcement?

Books of morality are daily written, yet its influence is still little in the world; so the ground is annually ploughed, and yet multitudes are in want of bread. But, surely, neither the labours of the moralist nor of the husbandman are vain: let them for a while neglect their tasks, and their usefulness will be known; the wickedness that is now frequent would become universal, the bread that is now scarce would wholly fail.

The power, indeed, of every individual is ſmall, and the conſequence of his endeavours imperceptible in a general proſpect of the world. Providence has given no man ability to do much, that ſomething might be left for every man to do. The buſineſs of life is carried on by a general co-operation; in which the part of any ſingle man can be no more diſtinguiſhed, than the effect of a particular drop when the meadows are floated by a ſummer ſhower: yet every drop increaſes the inundation, and every hand adds to the happineſs or miſery of mankind.

That a writer, however zealous or eloquent, ſeldom works a viſible effect upon cities or nations, will readily be granted. The book which is read moſt, is read by few, compared with thoſe that read it not; and of thoſe few, the greater part peruſe it with diſpoſitions that very little favour their own improvement.

It is difficult to enumerate the ſeveral motives which procure to books the honour of peruſal: ſpite, vanity, and curioſity, hope and fear, love and hatred, every paſſion which incites to any other action, ſerves at one time or other to ſtimulate a reader.

Some are fond to take a celebrated volume into their hands, becauſe they hope to diſtinguiſh their penetration, by finding faults which have eſcaped the publick; others eagerly buy it in the firſt bloom of reputation, that they may join the chorus of praiſe, and not lag, as *Falſtaff* terms it, in "the "rearward of the faſhion."

Some read for ſtyle, and ſome for argument: one has little care about the ſentiment, he obſerves only

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how it is expreſſed; another regards not the concluſion, but is diligent to mark how it is inferred: they read for other purpoſes than the attainment of practical knowledge; and are no more likely to grow wiſe by an examination of a treatiſe of moral prudence, than an architect to inflame his devotion by conſidering attentively the proportions of a temple.

Some read that they may embelliſh their converſation, or ſhine in diſpute; ſome that they may not be detected in ignorance, or want the reputation of literary accompliſhments: but the moſt general and prevalent reaſon of ſtudy is the impoſſibility of finding another amuſement equally cheap or conſtant, equally independent on the hour or the weather. He that wants money to follow the chaſe of pleaſure through her yearly circuit, and is left at home when the gay world rolls to *Bath* or *Tunbridge*; he whoſe gout compels him to hear from his chamber the rattle of chariots tranſporting happier beings to plays and aſſemblies, will be forced to ſeek in books a refuge from himſelf.

The author is not wholly uſeleſs, who provides innocent amuſements for minds like theſe. There are in the preſent ſtate of things ſo many more inſtigations to evil, than incitements to good, that he who keeps men in a neutral ſtate, may be juſtly conſidered as a benefactor to life.

But, perhaps, it ſeldom happens, that ſtudy terminates in mere paſtime. Books have always a ſecret influence on the underſtanding; we cannot at pleaſure obliterate ideas: he that reads books of ſcience,

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though without any fixed desire of improvement, will grow more knowing; he that entertains himself with moral or religious treatises, will imperceptibly advance in goodness; the ideas which are often offered to the mind, will at last find a lucky moment when it is disposed to receive them.

It is, therefore, urged without reason, as a discouragement to writers, that there are already books sufficient in the world; that all the topicks of persuasion have been discussed, and every important question clearly stated and justly decided; and that, therefore, there is no room to hope, that pigmies should conquer where heroes have been defeated, or that the petty copiers of the present time should advance the great work of reformation, which their predecessors were forced to leave unfinished.

Whatever be the present extent of human knowledge, it is not only finite, and therefore in its own nature capable of increase; but so narrow, that almost every understanding may, by a diligent application of its powers, hope to enlarge it. It is, however, not necessary, that a man should forbear to write, till he has discovered some truth unknown before; he may be sufficiently useful, by only diversifying the surface of knowledge, and luring the mind by a new appearance to a second view of those beauties which it had passed over inattentively before. Every writer may find intellects correspondent to his own, to whom his expressions are familiar, and his thoughts congenial; and, perhaps, truth is often more successfully propagated by men of moderate abilities, who, adopting the opinions of

others,

others, have no care but to explain them clearly, than by ſubtle ſpeculatiſts and curious ſearchers, who exact from their readers powers equal to their own, and if their fabricks of ſcience be ſtrong, take no care to render them acceſſible.

For my part, I do not regret the hours which I have laid out in theſe little compoſitions. That the world has grown apparently better, ſince the publication of the *Adventurer*, I have not obſerved; but am willing to think, that many have been affected by ſingle ſentiments, of which it is their buſineſs to renew the impreſſion; that many have caught hints of truth, which it is now their duty to purſue; and that thoſe who have received no improvement, have wanted not opportunity but intention to improve.

NUMB. 138. SATURDAY, *March* 2, 1754.

Quid purè tranquillet? honos, an dulce lucellum,
An ſecretum iter, et fallentis ſemita vitæ? HOR.

Whether the tranquil mind and pure,
Honours or wealth our bliſs inſure;
Or down through life unknown to ſtray,
Where lonely leads the ſilent way. FRANCIS.

HAVING conſidered the importance of authors to the welfare of the publick, I am led by a natural train of thought, to reflect on their condition with regard to themſelves; and to enquire what degree of happineſs or vexation is annexed to the difficult and laborious employment of providing inſtruction or entertainment for mankind.

In eſtimating the pain or pleaſure of any particular ſtate, every man, indeed, draws his deciſions from his own breaſt, and cannot with certainty determine, whether other minds are affected by the ſame cauſes in the ſame manner. Yet by this criterion we muſt be content to judge, becauſe no other can be obtained; and, indeed, we have no reaſon to think it very fallacious, for excepting here and there an anomalous mind, which either does not feel like others, or diſſembles its ſenſibility, we find men unanimouſly concur in attributing happineſs or miſery to particular conditions, as they agree in acknowledging the cold of winter and the heat of autumn.

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If we apply to authors themselves for an account of their ſtate, it will appear very little to deſerve envy; for they have in all ages been addicted to complaint. The neglect of learning, the ingratitude of the preſent age, and the abſurd preference by which ignorance and dullneſs often obtain favour and rewards, have been from age to age topicks of invective; and few have left their names to poſterity, without ſome appeal to future candour from the perverſeneſs and malice of their own times.

I have, nevertheleſs, been often inclined to doubt, whether authors, however querulous, are in reality more miſerable than their fellow mortals. The preſent life is to all a ſtate of infelicity; every man, like an author, believes himſelf to merit more than he obtains, and ſolaces the preſent with the proſpect of the future; others, indeed, ſuffer thoſe diſappointments in ſilence, of which the writer complains, to ſhew how well he has learnt the art of lamentation.

There is at leaſt one gleam of felicity, of which few writers have miſſed the enjoyment: he whoſe hopes have ſo far overpowered his fears, as that he has reſolved to ſtand forth a candidate for fame, ſeldom fails to amuſe himſelf, before his appearance, with pleaſing ſcenes of affluence or honour; while his fortune is yet under the regulation of fancy, he eaſily models it to his wiſh, ſuffers no thoughts of criticks or rivals to intrude upon his mind, but counts over the bounties of patronage, or liſtens to the voice of praiſe.

Some there are, that talk very luxuriouſly of the ſecond period of an author's happineſs, and tell of

the tumultuous raptures of invention, when the mind riots in imagery, and the choice ſtands ſuſpended between different ſentiments.

Theſe pleaſures, I believe, may ſometimes be indulged to thoſe, who come to a ſubject of diſquiſition with minds full of ideas, and with fancies ſo vigorous, as eaſily to excite, ſelect, and arrange them. To write is, indeed, no unpleaſing employment, when one ſentiment readily produces another, and both ideas and expreſſions preſent themſelves at the firſt ſummons; but ſuch happineſs, the greateſt genius does not always obtain; and common writers know it only to ſuch a degree, as to credit its poſſibility. Compoſition is, for the moſt part, an effort of ſlow diligence and ſteady perſeverance, to which the mind is dragged by neceſſity or reſolution, and from which the attention is every moment ſtarting to more delightful amuſements.

It frequently happens, that a deſign which, when conſidered at a diſtance, gave flattering hopes of facility, mocks us in the execution with unexpected difficulties; the mind which, while it conſidered it in the groſs, imagined itſelf amply furniſhed with materials, finds ſometimes an unexpected barrenneſs and vacuity, and wonders whither all thoſe ideas are vaniſhed, which a little before ſeemed ſtruggling for emiſſion.

Sometimes many thoughts preſent themſelves; but ſo confuſed and unconnected, that they are not without difficulty reduced to method, or concatenated, in a regular and dependent ſeries: the mind falls at once into a labyrinth, of which neither the beginning nor end can be diſcovered, and toils and ſtruggles without progreſs or extrication.

It

It is aſſerted by *Horace*, that "if matter be once "got together, words will be found with very little "difficulty;" a poſition which, though ſufficiently plauſible to be inſerted in poetical precepts, is by no means ſtrictly and philoſophically true. If words were naturally and neceſſarily conſequential to ſentiments, it would always follow, that he who has moſt knowledge muſt have moſt eloquence, and that every man would clearly expreſs what he fully underſtood: yet we find, that to think, and diſcourſe, are often the qualities of different perſons: and many books might ſurely be produced, where juſt and noble ſentiments are degraded and obſcured by unſuitable diction.

Words, therefore, as well as things, claim the care of an author. Indeed of many authors, and thoſe not uſeleſs or contemptible, words are almoſt the only care: many make it their ſtudy, not ſo much to ſtrike out new ſentiments, as to recommend thoſe which are already known to more favourable notice by fairer decorations; but every man, whether he copies or invents, whether he delivers his own thoughts or thoſe of another, has often found himſelf deficient in the power of expreſſion, big with ideas which he could not utter, obliged to ranſack his memory for terms adequate to his conceptions, and at laſt unable to impreſs upon his reader the image exiſting in his own mind.

It is one of the common diſtreſſes of a writer, to be within a word of a happy period, to want only a ſingle epithet to give amplification its full force, to require only a correſpondent term in order to finiſh a paragraph with elegance, and make one of its

members anſwer to the other: but theſe deficiencies cannot always be ſupplied; and after a long ſtudy and vexation, the paſſage is turned anew, and the web unwoven that was ſo nearly finiſhed.

But when thoughts and words are collected and adjuſted, and the whole compoſition at laſt concluded, it ſeldom gratifies the author, when he comes coolly and deliberately to review it, with the hopes which had been excited in the fury of the performance: novelty always captivates the mind; as our thoughts riſe freſh upon us, we readily believe them juſt and original, which, when the pleaſure of production is over, we find to be mean and common, or borrowed from the works of others, and ſupplied by memory rather than invention.

But though it ſhould happen that the writer finds no ſuch faults in his performance, he is ſtill to remember, that he looks upon it with partial eyes: and when he conſiders, how much men who could judge of others with great exactneſs, have often failed of judging of themſelves, he will be afraid of deciding too haſtily in his own favour, or of allowing himſelf to contemplate with too much complacence, treaſure that has not yet been brought to the teſt, nor paſſed the only trial that can ſtamp its value.

From the publick, and only from the publick, is he to await a confirmation of his claim, and a final juſtification of ſelf-eſteem; but the publick is not eaſily perſuaded to favour an author. If mankind were left to judge for themſelves, it is reaſonable to imagine, that of ſuch writings, at leaſt, as deſcribe the movements of the human paſſions, and of which every man carries the archetype within him, a juſt opinion

opinion would be formed; but whoever has remarked the fate of books, muſt have found it governed by other cauſes, than general conſent ariſing from general conviction. If a new performance happens not to fall into the hands of ſome, who have courage to tell, and authority to propagate their opinion, it often remains long in obſcurity, and periſhes unknown and unexamined. A few, a very few, commonly conſtitute the taſte of the time; the judgment which they have once pronounced, ſome are too lazy to diſcuſs, and ſome too timorous to contradict: it may however be, I think, obſerved, that their power is greater to depreſs than exalt, as mankind are more credulous of cenſure than of praiſe.

This perverſion of the publick judgment is not to be raſhly numbered amongſt the miſeries of an author; ſince it commonly ſerves, after miſcarriage, to reconcile him to himſelf. Becauſe the world has ſometimes paſſed an unjuſt ſentence, he readily concludes the ſentence unjuſt by which his performance is condemned; becauſe ſome have been exalted above their merits by partiality, he is ſure to aſcribe the ſucceſs of a rival, not to the merit of his work, but the zeal of his patrons. Upon the whole, as the author ſeems to ſhare all the common miſeries of life, he appears to partake likewiſe of its lenitives and abatements.

THE

HISTORY

OF

RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY.

YE who liſten with credulity to the whiſpers of fancy, and purſue with eagerneſs the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promiſes of youth, and that the deficiencies of the preſent day will be ſupplied by the morrow; attend to the hiſtory of Raſſelas prince of Abiſſinia.

Raſſelas was the fourth ſon of the mighty emperour, in whoſe dominions the Father of Waters begins his courſe; whoſe bounty pours down the ſtreams of plenty, and ſcatters over half the world the harveſts of Egypt.

According to the cuſtom which has deſcended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Raſſelas was confined in a private palace, with the other ſons and daughters of Abiſſinian royalty, till the order of ſucceſſion ſhould call him to the throne.

The place, which the wiſdom or policy of antiquity had deſtined for the reſidence of the Abiſſinian

nian princes, was a ſpacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, ſurrounded on every ſide by mountains, of which the ſummits overhang the middle part. The only paſſage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that paſſed under a rock, of which it has long been diſputed whether it was the work of nature or of human induſtry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was cloſed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, ſo maſſy that no man could without the help of engines open or ſhut them.

From the mountains on every ſide, rivulets deſcended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle inhabited by fiſh of every ſpecies, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake diſcharged its ſuperfluities by a ſtream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern ſide, and fell with dreadful noiſe from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The ſides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diverſified with flowers; every blaſt ſhook ſpices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the graſs, or brouſe the ſhrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extenſive circuit, ſecured from beaſts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the paſtures, on another all the beaſts of chaſe friſking in the lawns; the ſprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the ſubtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the ſo-

lemn elephant repoſing in the ſhade. All the diverſities of the world were brought together, the bleſſings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, ſupplied its inhabitants with the neceſſaries of life, and all delights and ſuperfluities were added at the annual viſit which the emperour paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the ſound of muſick; and during eight days every one that reſided in the valley was required to propoſe whatever might contribute to make ſeclufion pleaſant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and leſſen the tedioufneſs of time. Every deſire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleaſure were called to gladden the feſtivity; the muſicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers ſhewed their activity before the princes, in hope that they ſhould paſs their lives in this bliſsful captivity, to which thoſe only were admitted whoſe performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of ſecurity and delight which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always deſired that it might be perpetual; and as thoſe, on whom the iron gate had once cloſed, were never ſuffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new ſchemes of delight, and new competitors for impriſonment.

The palace ſtood on an eminence raiſed about thirty paces above the ſurface of the lake. It was divided into many ſquares or courts, built with greater or leſs magnificence, according to the rank

of

of thoſe for whom they were deſigned. The roofs were turned into arches of maſſy ſtone joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building ſtood from century to century deriding the ſolſtitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This houſe, which was ſo large as to be fully known to none but ſome ancient officers who ſucceſſively inherited the ſecrets of the place, was built as if ſuſpicion herſelf had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and ſecret paſſage, every ſquare had a communication with the reſt, either from the upper ſtories by private galleries, or by ſubterranean paſſages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unſuſpected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had repoſited their treaſures. They then cloſed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmoſt exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itſelf concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperour, attended by the prince who ſtood next in ſucceſſion.

CHAP. II.

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY.

HERE the ſons and daughters of Abiſſinia lived only to know the ſoft viciſſitudes of pleaſure and repoſe, attended by all that were ſkilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the ſenſes can

enjoy.

enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them, told them of nothing but the miseries of publick life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful; few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who in the twenty-sixth year of his age began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of musick. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love

love of pleaſure: he neglected their officiouſneſs, repulſed their invitations, and ſpent day after day on the banks of rivulets ſheltered with trees, where he ſometimes liſtened to the birds in the branches, ſometimes obſerved the fiſh playing in the ſtream, and anon caſt his eyes upon the paſtures and mountains filled with animals, of which ſome were biting the herbage, and ſome ſleeping among the buſhes.

This ſingularity of his humour made him much obſerved. One of the Sages, in whoſe converſation he had formerly delighted, followed him ſecretly, in hope of diſcovering the cauſe of his diſquiet. Raſſelas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for ſome time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were brouſing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

"What," ſaid he, "makes the difference between man and all the reſt of the animal creation? Every beaſt that ſtrays beſide me has the ſame corporal neceſſities with myſelf; he is hungry and crops the graſs, he is thirſty and drinks the ſtream, his thirſt and hunger are appeaſed, he is ſatisfied and ſleeps; he riſes again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at reſt. I am hungry and thirſty like him, but when thirſt and hunger ceaſe I am not at reſt; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, ſatisfied with fulneſs. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they ſit in ſeeming happineſs on the branches, and waſte their lives

in tuning one unvaried ſeries of ſounds. I likewiſe can call the lutaniſt and the ſinger, but the ſounds that pleaſed me yeſterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more weariſome to-morrow. I can diſcover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleaſure, yet I do not feel myſelf delighted. Man ſurely has ſome latent ſenſe for which this place affords no gratification, or he has ſome deſires diſtinct from ſenſe, which muſt be ſatisfied before he can be happy."

After this he lifted up his head, and ſeeing the moon riſing, walked towards the palace. As he paſſed through the fields, and ſaw the animals around him, "Ye, ſaid he, are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myſelf; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many diſtreſſes from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I ſometimes ſhrink at evils recollected, and ſometimes ſtart at evils anticipated: ſurely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar ſufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With obſervations like theſe the prince amuſed himſelf as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that diſcovered him to feel ſome complacence in his own perſpicacity, and to receive ſome ſolace of the miſeries of life, from conſciouſneſs of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diverſions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAP. III.

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.

ON the next day his old inſtructor, imagining that he had now made himſelf acquainted with his diſeaſe of mind, was in hope of curing it by counſel, and officiouſly ſought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long conſidered him as one whoſe intellects were exhauſted, was not very willing to afford: "Why, ſaid he, does this man thus intrude upon me; ſhall I be never ſuffered to forget thoſe lectures which pleaſed only while they were new, and to become new again muſt be forgotten?" He then walked into the wood, and compoſed himſelf to his uſual meditations; when before his thoughts had taken any ſettled form, he perceived his purſuer at his ſide, and was at firſt prompted by his impatience to go haſtily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once reverenced and ſtill loved, he invited him to ſit down with him on the bank.

The old man thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately obſerved in the prince, and to enquire why he ſo often retired from the pleaſures of the palace, to lonelineſs and ſilence. "I fly from pleaſure, ſaid the prince, becauſe pleaſure has ceaſed to pleaſe; I am lonely becauſe I am miſerable, and am unwilling to cloud with my preſence the happineſs of others." "You, Sir, ſaid the ſage, are the firſt who has complained of miſery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cauſe. You are here

here in full poſſeſſion of all that the emperour of Abiſſinia can beſtow; here is neither labour to be endured nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchaſe. Look round and tell me which of your wants is without ſupply: if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?"

"That I want nothing, ſaid the prince, or that I know not what I want, is the cauſe of my complaint; if I had any known want, I ſhould have a certain wiſh; that wiſh would excite endeavour, and I ſhould not then repine to ſee the ſun move ſo ſlowly towards the weſtern mountain, or lament when the day breaks and ſleep will no longer hide me from myſelf. When I ſee the kids and the lambs chaſing one another, I fancy that I ſhould be happy if I had ſomething to purſue. But, poſſeſſing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is ſtill more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now ſeem as ſhort as in my childhood, while nature was yet freſh, and every moment ſhewed me what I never had obſerved before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me ſomething to deſire."

The old man was ſurpriſed at this new ſpecies of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be ſilent. "Sir, ſaid he, if you had ſeen the miſeries of the world, you would know how to value your preſent ſtate." "Now, ſaid the prince, you have given me ſomething to deſire; I ſhall long to ſee the miſeries of the world, ſince the ſight of them is neceſſary to happineſs."

CHAP. IV.

THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.

AT this time the found of mufick proclaimed the hour of repaft, and the converfation was concluded. The old man went away fufficiently difcontented, to find that his reafonings had produced the only conclufion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life fhame and grief are of fhort duration; whether it be that we bear eafily what we have borne long, or that, finding ourfelves in age lefs regarded, we lefs regard others; or, that we look with flight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whofe views were extended to a wider fpace, could not fpeedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promifed him, becaufe he confidered that in a long time much muft be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, becaufe in many years much might be done.

This firft beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the luftre of his eyes. He was fired with the defire of doing fomething, though he knew not yet with diftinctnefs, either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unfocial; but, confidering himfelf as mafter of a fecret ftock of happinefs, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be bufy in all fchemes of

diverfion,

diverſion, and endeavoured to make others pleaſed with the ſtate of which he himſelf was weary. But pleaſures never can be ſo multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could ſpend without ſuſpicion in ſolitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the aſſemblies, becauſe he ſuppoſed the frequency of his preſence neceſſary to the ſucceſs of his purpoſes; he retired gladly to privacy, becauſe he had now a ſubject of thought.

His chief amuſement was to picture to himſelf that world which he had never ſeen; to place himſelf in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of diſtreſs, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppreſſion, and the diffuſion of happineſs.

Thus paſſed twenty months of the life of Raſſelas. He buſied himſelf ſo intenſely in viſionary buſtle, that he forgot his real ſolitude, and, amidſt hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to conſider by what means he ſhould mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was ſitting on a bank, he feigned to himſelf an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for reſtitution and redreſs. So ſtrongly was the image impreſſed upon his mind, that he ſtarted up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to ſeize the plunderer with all the eagerneſs of real purſuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Raſſelas could

not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then raising his eyes to the mountain, "This, said he, is the fatal obstacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!"

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life, said he, is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?"

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. "The rest of my time, said he,

has

has been loſt by the crime or folly of my anceſtors, and the abſurd inſtitutions of my country; I remember it with diſguſt, yet without remorſe: but the months that have paſſed ſince new light darted into my ſoul, ſince I formed a ſcheme of reaſonable felicity, have been ſquandered by my own fault. I have loſt that which can never be reſtored: I have ſeen the ſun riſe and ſet for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: In this time the birds have left the neſt of their mother, and committed themſelves to the woods and to the ſkies: the kid has forſaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in queſt of independent ſuſtenance. I only have made no advances, but am ſtill helpleſs and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admoniſhed me of the flux of life; the ſtream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I ſat feaſting on intellectual luxury, regardleſs alike of the examples of the earth, and the inſtructions of the planets. Twenty months are paſſed, who ſhall reſtore them?"

Theſe ſorrowful meditations faſtened upon his mind; he paſſed four months in reſolving to loſe no more time in idle reſolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Raſſelas reproached himſelf that he had not diſcovered it, having not known, or not conſidered, how many uſeful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to diſtant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few

hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

CHAP. V.

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by its position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible enquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

CHAP. VI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence

it

it was diſtributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial ſhowers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that ran through it gave a conſtant motion; and inſtruments of ſoft muſick were placed at proper diſtances, of which ſome played by the impulſe of the wind, and ſome by the power of the ſtream.

This artiſt was ſometimes viſited by Raſſelas, who was pleaſed with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquiſitions ſhould be of uſe to him in the open world. He came one day to amuſe himſelf in his uſual manner, and found the maſter buſy in building a ſailing chariot: he ſaw that the deſign was practicable upon a level ſurface, and with expreſſions of great eſteem ſolicited its completion. The workman was pleaſed to find himſelf ſo much regarded by the prince, and reſolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir, ſaid he, you have ſeen but a ſmall part of what the mechanick ſciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that inſtead of the tardy conveyance of ſhips and chariots, man might uſe the ſwifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleneſs need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's deſire of paſſing the mountains; having ſeen what the mechaniſt had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet reſolved to enquire further, before he ſuffered hope to afflict him by diſappointment. "I am afraid, ſaid he to the artiſt, that your

your imagination prevails over your ſkill, and that you now tell me rather what you wiſh, than what you know. Every animal has his element aſſigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beaſts the earth." "So, replied the mechaniſt, fiſhes have the water, in which yet beaſts can ſwim by nature, and men by art. He that can ſwim needs not deſpair to fly: to ſwim is to fly in a groſſer fluid, and to fly is to ſwim in a ſubtler. We are only to proportion our power of reſiſtance to the different denſity of matter through which we are to paſs. You will be neceſſarily upborn by the air, if you can renew any impulſe upon it, faſter than the air can recede from the preſſure."

"But the exerciſe of ſwimming, ſaid the prince, is very laborious; the ſtrongeſt limbs are ſoon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent, and wings will be of no great uſe, unleſs we can fly further than we can ſwim."

"The labour of riſing from the ground, ſaid the artiſt, will be great, as we ſee it in the heavier domeſtick fowls, but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminiſhed, till we ſhall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall: no care will then be neceſſary but to move forwards, which the gentleſt impulſe will effect. You, Sir, whoſe curioſity is ſo extenſive, will eaſily conceive with what pleaſure a philoſopher, furniſhed with wings, and hovering in the ſky, would ſee the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and preſenting to him ſucceſſively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the

fame parallel. How muſt it amuſe the pendent ſpectator to ſee the moving ſcene of land and ocean, cities and deſerts! To ſurvey with equal ſecurity the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infeſted by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How eaſily ſhall we then trace the Nile through all his paſſage; paſs over to diſtant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!"

"All this, ſaid the prince, is much to be deſired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in theſe regions of ſpeculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that reſpiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from theſe precipices, though ſo high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very eaſy to fall: therefore I ſuſpect, that from any height, where life can be ſupported, there may be danger of too quick deſcent."

"Nothing, replied the artiſt, will ever be attempted, if all poſſible objections muſt be firſt overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the firſt flight at my own hazard. I have conſidered the ſtructure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings moſt eaſily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I ſhall begin my taſk to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and purſuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art ſhall not be divulged, and that you ſhall not require me to make wings for any but ourſelves."

"Why,

"Why, ſaid Raſſelas, ſhould you envy others ſo great an advantage? All ſkill ought to be exerted for univerſal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindneſs that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous, returned the artiſt, I ſhould with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the ſecurity of the good, if the bad could at pleaſure invade them from the ſky? Againſt an army ſailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor ſeas, could afford any ſecurity. A flight of northern ſavages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irreſiſtible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happineſs, might be violated by the ſudden deſcent of ſome of the naked nations that ſwarm on the coaſt of the ſouthern ſea."

The prince promiſed ſecrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeleſs of ſucceſs. He viſited the work from time to time, obſerved its progreſs, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with ſtrength. The artiſt was every day more certain that he ſhould leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence ſeized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finiſhed, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furniſhed for flight on a little promontory: he waved his pinions a while to gather air, then leaped from his ſtand, and in an inſtant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no uſe in the air, ſuſtained him

in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAP. VII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand; he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence, on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestick amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was

was particularly ſeized by a poem, which Imlac rehearſed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verſes a ſecond time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himſelf happy in having found a man who knew the world ſo well, and could ſo ſkilfully paint the ſcenes of life. He aſked a thouſand queſtions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a ſtranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curioſity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and inſtruction, ſo that the prince regretted the neceſſity of ſleep, and longed till the morning ſhould renew his pleaſure.

As they were ſitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his hiſtory, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to cloſe his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Raſſelas was called to a concert, and obliged to reſtrain his curioſity till the evening.

CHAP. VIII.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.

THE cloſe of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only ſeaſon of diverſion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the muſic ceaſed, and the princeſſes retired. Raſſelas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the ſtory of his life.

"Sir,

"Sir, said Imlac, my history will not be long: the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in publick, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to enquire, and answer enquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terrour, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments, and narrow comprehension: he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governours of the province."

"Surely, said the prince, my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperour, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governour who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperour."

"Sir, said Imlac, your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with less impatience of the governour.

Oppression

Oppreſſion is, in the Abiſſinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet diſcovered, by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination ſuppoſes power on one part, and ſubjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will ſometimes be abuſed. The vigilance of the ſupreme magiſtrate may do much, but much will ſtill remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can ſeldom puniſh all that he knows."

"This, ſaid the prince, I do not underſtand, but I had rather hear thee than diſpute. Continue thy narration."

"My father, proceeded Imlac, originally intended that I ſhould have no other education, than ſuch as might qualify me for commerce; and diſcovering in me great ſtrength of memory, and quickneſs of apprehenſion, often declared his hope that I ſhould be ſome time the richeſt man in Abiſſinia."

"Why, ſaid the prince, did thy father deſire the increaſe of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durſt diſcover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconſiſtencies cannot both be true."

"Inconſiſtencies, anſwered Imlac, cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diverſity is not inconſiſtency. My father might expect a time of greater ſecurity. However, ſome deſire is neceſſary to keep life in motion, and he, whoſe real wants are ſupplied, muſt admit thoſe of fancy."

"This, said the prince, I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee."

"With this hope, proceeded Imlac, he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

"At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce, and opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. This, young man, said he, is the stock with which you must negociate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.

"We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the ſhore of the Red Sea. When I caſt my eye on the expanſe of waters, my heart bounded like that of a priſoner eſcaped. I felt an unextinguiſhable curioſity kindle in my mind, and reſolved to ſnatch this opportunity of ſeeing the manners of other nations, and of learning ſciences unknown in Abiſſinia.

"I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my ſtock, not by a promiſe which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant deſire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirſt of curioſity.

"As I was ſuppoſed to trade without connexion with my father, it was eaſy for me to become acquainted with the maſter of a ſhip, and procure a paſſage to ſome other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was ſufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I ſhould ſee a country which I had not ſeen before. I therefore entered a ſhip bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

"WHEN I firſt entered upon the world of waters, and loſt ſight of land, I looked round about me with pleaſing terrour, and thinking my ſoul enlarged by the boundleſs proſpect, imagined

that I could gaze round for ever without ſatiety; but, in a ſhort time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only ſee again what I had already ſeen. I then deſcended into the ſhip, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleaſures would not end like this, in diſguſt and diſappointment. Yet, ſurely, ſaid I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is reſt and motion, but the earth has mountains and vallies, deſerts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different cuſtoms and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I ſhould miſs it in nature.

"With this thought I quieted my mind, and amuſed myſelf during the voyage, ſometimes by learning from the ſailors the art of navigation, which I have never practiſed, and ſometimes by forming ſchemes for my conduct in different ſituations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

"I was almoſt weary of my naval amuſements when we landed ſafely at Surat. I ſecured my money, and purchaſing ſome commodities for ſhow, joined myſelf to a caravan that was paſſing into the inland country. My companions, for ſome reaſon or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my enquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, conſidered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the uſual expence the art of fraud. They expoſed me to the theft of ſervants, and the exaction of officers, and ſaw me plundered upon falſe pretences, without any advantage to themſelves, but

that

that of rejoicing in the ſuperiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment, ſaid the prince. Is there ſuch depravity in man, as that he ſhould injure another without benefit to himſelf? I can eaſily conceive that all are pleaſed with ſuperiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reaſon to applaud themſelves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have ſhewn by warning, as betraying you."

"Pride, ſaid Imlac, is ſeldom delicate, it will pleaſe itſelf with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happineſs, but when it may be compared with the miſery of others. They were my enemies, becauſe they grieved to think me rich; and my oppreſſors, becauſe they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed, ſaid the prince: I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to miſtaken motives."

"In this company, ſaid Imlac, I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indoſtan, the city in which the great Mogul commonly reſides. I applied myſelf to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converſe with the learned men; ſome of whom I found moroſe and reſerved, and others eaſy and communicative; ſome were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themſelves; and ſome ſhewed that the end of their ſtudies was to gain the dignity of inſtructing.

"To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myſelf ſo much, that I was preſented to the emperour as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperour aſked me many queſtions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he diſmiſſed me aſtoniſhed at his wiſdom, and enamoured of his goodneſs.

"My credit was now ſo high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the Court. I was ſurpriſed at their confidence of ſolicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and ſhewed no tokens of ſhame or ſorrow.

"They then urged their requeſt with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindneſs, I would not do for money; and refuſed them, not becauſe they had injured me, but becauſe I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made uſe of my credit to cheat thoſe who ſhould buy their wares.

"Having reſided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Perſia, where I ſaw many remains of ancient magnificence, and obſerved many new accommodations of life. The Perſians are a nation eminently ſocial, and their aſſemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

"From Perſia I paſſed into Arabia, where I ſaw a nation at once paſtoral and warlike; who live

without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.

CHAP. X.

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION UPON POETRY.

"WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelick Nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best: whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent which it received by accident at first: or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe Nature and Passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and

invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

"I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen: I could not hope to move those with delight or terrour, whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

"Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw every thing with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who

knows moſt, will have moſt power of diverſifying his ſcenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote alluſions and unexpected inſtruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to ſtudy, and every country which I have ſurveyed has contributed ſomething to my poetical powers."

"In ſo wide a ſurvey, ſaid the prince, you muſt ſurely have left much unobſerved. I have lived, till now, within the circuit of theſe mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the ſight of ſomething which I had never beheld before, or never heeded."

"The buſineſs of a poet, ſaid Imlac, is to examine, not the individual, but the ſpecies; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the ſtreaks of the tulip, or deſcribe the different ſhades in the verdure of the foreſt. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature ſuch prominent and ſtriking features, as recall the original to every mind; and muſt neglect the minuter diſcriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for thoſe characteriſticks which are alike obvious to vigilance and careleſſneſs.

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the taſk of a poet; he muſt be acquainted likewiſe with all the modes of life. His character requires that he eſtimate the happineſs and miſery of every condition; obſerve the power of all the paſſions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various inſtitutions and accidental influences of climate or cuſtom, from the ſprightlineſs of infancy to the de-

ſpondence

ſpondence of decrepitude. He muſt diveſt himſelf of the prejudices of his age or country; he muſt conſider right and wrong in their abſtracted and invariable ſtate; he muſt diſregard preſent laws and opinions, and riſe to general and tranſcendental truths, which will always be the ſame: he muſt therefore content himſelf with the ſlow progreſs of his name; contemn the applauſe of his own time, and commit his claims to the juſtice of poſterity. He muſt write as the interpreter of nature, and the legiſlator of mankind, and conſider himſelf as preſiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being ſuperior to time and place.

"His labour is not yet at an end: he muſt know many languages and many ſciences; and, that his ſtyle may be worthy of his thoughts, muſt, by inceſſant practice, familiarize to himſelf every delicacy of ſpeech and grace of harmony."

CHAP. XI.

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON PILGRIMAGE.

IMLAC now felt the enthuſiaſtick fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profeſſion, when the prince cried out, "Enough! thou haſt convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."

"To be a poet, ſaid Imlac, is indeed very difficult." "So difficult, returned the prince, that I will at preſent hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went when you had ſeen Perſia."

"From

"From Perſia, ſaid the poet, I travelled through Syria, and for three years reſided in Paleſtine, where I converſed with great numbers of the northern and weſtern nations of Europe; the nations which are now in poſſeſſion of all power and all knowledge; whoſe armies are irreſiſtible, and whoſe fleets command the remoteſt parts of the globe. When I compared theſe men with the natives of our own kingdom, and thoſe that ſurround us, they appeared almoſt another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wiſh for any thing that may not be obtained: a thouſand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleaſure; and whatever their own climate has denied them is ſupplied by their commerce."

"By what means, ſaid the prince, are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, ſince they can ſo eaſily viſit Aſia and Africa for trade or conqueſt, cannot the Aſiaticks and Africans invade their coaſts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The ſame wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, Sir, than we, anſwered Imlac, becauſe they are wiſer; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reaſon can be given, but the unſearchable will of the Supreme Being."

"When, ſaid the prince with a ſigh, ſhall I be able to viſit Paleſtine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment ſhall

arrive,

arrive, let me fill up the time with ſuch repreſentations as thou canſt give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that aſſembles ſuch numbers in that place, and cannot but conſider it as the centre of wiſdom and piety, to which the beſt and wiſeſt men of every land muſt be continually reſorting."

"There are ſome nations, ſaid Imlac, that ſend few viſitants to Paleſtine; for many numerous and learned ſects in Europe concur to cenſure pilgrimage as ſuperſtitious, or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know, ſaid the prince, how little my life has made me acquainted with diverſity of opinions: it will be too long to hear the arguments on both ſides; you, that have conſidered them, tell me the reſult."

"Pilgrimage, ſaid Imlac, like many other acts of piety, may be reaſonable or ſuperſtitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journies in ſearch of truth are not commanded. Truth, ſuch as is neceſſary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honeſtly ſought. Change of place is no natural cauſe of the increaſe of piety, for it inevitably produces diſſipation of mind. Yet, ſince men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with ſtronger impreſſions of the event, curioſity of the ſame kind may naturally diſpoſe us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man ſurveys thoſe awful ſcenes without ſome confirmation of holy reſolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more eaſily propitiated in one place than in another, is the

the dream of idle ſuperſtition; but that ſome places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will juſtify. He who ſuppoſes that his vices may be more ſucceſsfully combated in Paleſtine, will, perhaps, find himſelf miſtaken, yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, diſhonours at once his reaſon and religion."

"These, ſaid the prince, are European diſtinctions. I will conſider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are thoſe nations happier than we?"

"There is ſo much infelicity, ſaid the poet, in the world, that ſcarce any man has leiſure from his own diſtreſſes to eſtimate the comparative happineſs of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleaſure, as is confeſſed by the natural deſire which every mind feels of increaſing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the ſoul ſits motionleſs and torpid for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural conſequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

"In enumerating the particular comforts of life we ſhall find many advantages on the ſide of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diſeaſes with which we languiſh and periſh. We ſuffer inclemencies of weather which they can obviate. They have engines for the diſpatch of many laborious

works,

works, which we muſt perform by manual induſtry. There is ſuch communication between diſtant places, that one friend can hardly be ſaid to be abſent from another. Their policy removes all publick inconveniencies: they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we deſcend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their poſſeſſions are more ſecure."

"They are ſurely happy, ſaid the prince, who have all theſe conveniencies, of which I envy none ſo much as the facility with which ſeparated friends interchange their thoughts."

"The Europeans, anſwered Imlac, are leſs unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a ſtate in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed."

CHAP. XII.

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

"I AM not yet willing, ſaid the prince, to ſuppoſe that happineſs is ſo parſimoniouſly diſtributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I ſhould be able to fill every day with pleaſure. I would injure no man, and ſhould provoke no reſentment: I would relieve every diſtreſs, and ſhould enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would chuſe my friends among the wiſe, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore ſhould be in no danger from treachery or unkindneſs. My children ſhould, by my care, be

learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to moleſt him who might call on every ſide to thouſands enriched by his bounty, or aſſiſted by his power? And why ſhould not life glide quietly away in the ſoft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather ſpecious than uſeful. Let us leave them, and purſue our journey."

"From Paleſtine, ſaid Imlac, I paſſed through many regions of Aſia; in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At laſt I began to long for my native country, that I might repoſe after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had ſpent my earlieſt years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myſelf thoſe with whom I had ſported away the gay hours of dawning life, ſitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and liſtening to my counſels.

"When this thought had taken poſſeſſion of my mind, I conſidered every moment as waſted which did not bring me nearer to Abiſſinia. I haſtened into Egypt, and notwithſtanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in enquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; ſome brought thither by the love of knowledge, ſome by the hope of gain, and many by the deſire of living after their own manner without obſervation, and of lying hid in the obſcurity

ſcurity of multitudes: for in a city, populous as Cairo, it is poſſible to obtain at the ſame time the gratifications of ſociety, and the ſecrecy of ſolitude.

"From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, paſſing along the coaſt till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myſelf to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

"I now expected the careſſes of my kinſmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had ſet upon riches, would own with gladneſs and pride a ſon who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was ſoon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to ſome other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the reſt, ſome could with difficulty remember me, and ſome conſidered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

"A man uſed to viciſſitudes is not eaſily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my diſappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myſelf to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my ſtory, and diſmiſſed me. I opened a ſchool, and was prohibited to teach. I then reſolved to ſit down in the quiet of domeſtick life, and addreſſed a lady that was fond of my converſation, but rejected my ſuit, becauſe my father was a merchant.

"Wearied at laſt with ſolicitation and repulſes, I reſolved to hide myſelf for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others.

others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* ſhould open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear: the day came; my performance was diſtinguiſhed with favour, and I reſigned myſelf with joy to perpetual confinement."

"Haſt thou here found happineſs at laſt? ſaid Raſſelas. Tell me without reſerve; art thou content with thy condition? or, doſt thou wiſh to be again wandering and enquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and at the annual viſit of the emperour, invite others to partake of their felicity."

"Great prince, ſaid Imlac, I ſhall ſpeak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am leſs unhappy than the reſt, becauſe I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleaſure. I can amuſe my ſolitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the accidents of my paſt life. Yet all this ends in the ſorrowful conſideration, that my acquirements are now uſeleſs, and that none of my pleaſures can be again enjoyed. The reſt, whoſe minds have no impreſſion but of the preſent moment, are either corroded by malignant paſſions, or ſit ſtupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What paſſions can infeſt thoſe, ſaid the prince, who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repreſſed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community, ſaid Imlac, of material poſſeſſions, but there can never be commu-

nity of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another; he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac, said the prince, I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the happy valley. I have examined the mountains on every side, but find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the *choice of life*."

"Sir, answered the poet, your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the

rocks of treachery. Amidſt wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wiſh a thouſand times for theſe ſeats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not ſeek to deter me from my purpoſe, ſaid the prince: I am impatient to ſee what thou haſt ſeen; and, ſince thou art thyſelf weary of the valley, it is evident, that thy former ſtate was better than this. Whatever be the conſequence of my experiment, I am reſolved to judge with mine own eyes of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my *choice of life.*"

"I am afraid, ſaid Imlac, you are hindered by ſtronger reſtraints than my perſuaſions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counſel you to deſpair. Few things are impoſſible to diligence and ſkill."

CHAP. XIII.

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THE prince now diſmiſſed his favourite to reſt, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable queſtions for the morning.

Much of his uneaſineſs was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whoſe experience could aſſiſt him in his deſigns. His heart was no longer condemned to ſwell with ſilent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with ſuch a companion, and

that if they could range the world together, he ſhould have nothing further to deſire.

In a few days the water was diſcharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converſe without the notice of the reſt. The prince, whoſe thoughts were always on the wing, as he paſſed by the gate, ſaid, with a countenance of ſorrow, "Why art thou ſo ſtrong, and why is man ſo weak?"

"Man is not weak, anſwered his companion; knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The maſter of mechanicks laughs at ſtrength. I can burſt the gate, but cannot do it ſecretly. Some other expedient muſt be tried."

As they were walking on the ſide of the mountain, they obſerved that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken ſhelter among the buſhes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity, ſaid Imlac, that human reaſon borrowed many arts from the inſtinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourſelves degraded by learning from the coney. We may eſcape by piercing the mountain in the ſame direction. We will begin where the ſummit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we ſhall iſſue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this propoſal, ſparkled with joy. The execution was eaſy, and the ſucceſs certain.

No time was now loſt. They haſtened early in the morning to chuſe a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and

and brambles, and returned without having diſcovered any part that favoured their deſign. The ſecond and the third day were ſpent in the ſame manner and with the ſame fruſtration. But, on the fourth, they found a ſmall cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they reſolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured inſtruments proper to hew ſtone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerneſs than vigour. They were preſently exhauſted by their efforts, and ſat down to pant upon the graſs. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be diſcouraged. "Sir, ſaid his companion, practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will ſome time have an end. Great works are performed, not by ſtrength, but perſeverance: yonder palace was raiſed by ſingle ſtones, yet you ſee its height and ſpacioùſneſs. He that ſhall walk with vigour three hours a day, will paſs in ſeven years a ſpace equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a ſhort time, found a fiſſure in the rock, which enabled them to paſs far with very little obſtruction. This Raſſelas conſidered as a good omen. "Do not diſturb your mind, ſaid Imlac, with other hopes or fears than reaſon may ſuggeſt: if you are pleaſed with prognoſticks of good, you will be terrified likewiſe with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to ſuperſtition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cauſe of ſucceſs. This is one of thoſe pleaſing ſurpriſes which often

happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance."

CHAP. XIV.

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, and yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

"Do not imagine, said the princess, that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since then not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and

grieved that he had loſt an opportunity of ſhewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that ſhe ſhould leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, ſhe ſhould watch, leſt any other ſtraggler ſhould, by chance or curioſity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they ſaw light beyond the prominence, and, iſſuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleaſures of travel, and in thought was already tranſported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his eſcape, had leſs expectation of pleaſure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Raſſelas was ſo much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not ſoon be perſuaded to return into the valley. He informed his ſiſter that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

CHAP. XV.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY, AND SEE MANY WONDERS.

THE prince and princeſs had jewels ſufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princeſs was

followed only by a ſingle favourite, who did not know whither ſhe was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other ſide. The princeſs and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, ſeeing nothing to bound their proſpect, conſidered themſelves as in danger of being loſt in a dreary vacuity. They ſtopped and trembled. "I am almoſt afraid, ſaid the princeſs, to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immenſe plain, where I may be approached on every ſide by men whom I never ſaw." The prince felt nearly the ſame emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac ſmiled at their terrours, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princeſs continued irreſolute till ſhe had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found ſome ſhepherds in the field, who ſet milk and fruits before them. The princeſs wondered that ſhe did not ſee a palace ready for her reception, and a table ſpread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, ſhe drank the milk and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by eaſy journies, being all unaccuſtomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be miſſed, they could not be purſued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expreſſed at the diverſity of manners, ſtations, and employments.

Their drefs was fuch as might not bring upon them the fufpicion of having any thing to conceal, yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princefs was frighted, becaufe thofe that came into her prefence did not proftrate themfelves before her. Imlac was forced to obferve them with great vigilance, left they fhould betray their rank by their unufual behaviour, and detained them feveral weeks in the firft village, to accuftom them to the fight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to underftand that they had for a time laid afide their dignity, and were to expect only fuch regard as liberality and courtefy could procure. And Imlac having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggednefs of the commercial race, brought them down to the fea-coaft.

The prince and his fifter, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for fome months at the port without any inclination to pafs further. Imlac was content with their ftay, becaufe he did not think it fafe to expofe them, unpractifed in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At laft he began to fear left they fhould be difcovered, and propofed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretenfions to judge for themfelves, and referred the whole fcheme to his direction. He therefore took paffage in a fhip to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princefs to enter the veffel. They had a quick and profperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.

AS they approached the city, which filled the ftrangers with aftonifhment, "This, faid Imlac to the prince, is the place where travellers and merchants affemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you fhall live as ftrangers, who have no other end of travel than curiofity; it will foon be obferved that we are rich; our reputation will procure us accefs to all whom we fhall defire to know; you will fee all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourfelf at leifure to make your *choice of life*.

They now entered the town, ftunned by the noife, and offended by the crowds. Inftruction had not yet fo prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to fee themfelves pafs undiftinguifhed along the ftreet, and met by the loweft of the people without reverence or notice. The princefs could not at firft bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for fome days, continued in her chamber, where fhe was ferved by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who underftood traffick, fold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a houfe, which he adorned with fuch magnificence, that he was immediately confidered as a merchant of great wealth. His politenefs attracted many acquaintance, and his generofity made him courted by many dependants.

His

His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and ſolicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the converſation, could make no diſcovery of their ignorance or ſurpriſe, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the uſe and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with ſmall pieces of gold and ſilver, or why things of ſo little uſe ſhould be received as equivalent to the neceſſaries of life.

They ſtudied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to ſet before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the buſy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince being now able to converſe with fluency, and having learned the caution neceſſary to be obſerved in his intercourſe with ſtrangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of reſort, and to enter into all aſſemblies, that he might make his *choice of life*.

For ſome time he thought choice needleſs, becauſe all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindneſs, and heard the ſong of joy or the laugh of careleſſneſs. He began to believe that the world overflowed with univerſal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand ſhowered liberality,

and

and every heart melted with benevolence; "and who then, says he, will be suffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat a while silent, "I know not, said the prince, what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court; I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness."

"Every man, said Imlac, may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This, said the prince, may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another,

anothet, and wiſdom ſurely directs us to take the leaſt evil in the *choice of life.*"

"The cauſes of good and evil, anſwered Imlac, are ſo various and uncertain, ſo often entangled with each other, ſo diverſified by various relations, and ſo much ſubject to accidents which cannot be foreſeen, that he who would fix his condition upon inconteſtible reaſons of preference, muſt live and die enquiring and deliberating."

"But ſurely, ſaid Raſſelas, the wiſe men, to whom we liſten with reverence and wonder, choſe that mode of life for themſelves which they thought moſt likely to make them happy."

"Very few, ſaid the poet, live by choice. Every man is placed in his preſent condition by cauſes which acted without his foreſight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own."

"I am pleaſed to think, ſaid the prince, that my birth has given me at leaſt one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myſelf. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leiſure: ſurely happineſs is ſomewhere to be found."

CHAP. XVII.

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT AND GAIETY.

RASSELAS roſe next day, and reſolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth, cried he, is the time of gladneſs: I will join myſelf to the young men, whoſe only buſineſs is to gratify their

their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded, that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. "Happiness, said he, must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonstrance. "My friends, said he, I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us,

therefore, ſtop, while to ſtop is in our power: let us live as men who are ſome time to grow old, and to whom it will be the moſt dreadful of all evils to count their paſt years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They ſtared a while in ſilence one upon another, and at laſt drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The conſciouſneſs that his ſentiments were juſt, and his intentions kind, was ſcarcely ſufficient to ſupport him againſt the horror of deriſion. But he recovered his tranquillity, and purſued his ſearch.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.

AS he was one day walking in the ſtreet, he ſaw a ſpacious building which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the ſtream of people, and found it a hall or ſchool of declamation, in which profeſſors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a ſage raiſed above the reſt, who diſcourſed with great energy on the government of the paſſions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He ſhewed, with great ſtrength of ſentiment, and variety of illuſtration, that human nature is degraded and debaſed, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of paſſion, uſurps the dominion of the mind, nothing enſues but

but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience, concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a

purse

purſe of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found, ſaid the prince, at his return to Imlac, a man who can teach all that is neceſſary to be known, who, from the unſhaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the ſcenes of life changing beneath him. He ſpeaks, and attention watches his lips. He reaſons, and conviction cloſes his periods. This man ſhall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life."

"Be not too haſty, ſaid Imlac, to truſt, or to admire, the teachers of morality: they diſcourſe like angels, but they live like men."

Raſſelas, who could not conceive how any man could reaſon ſo forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his viſit in a few days, and was denied admiſſion. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philoſopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes miſty, and his face pale. "Sir, ſaid he, you are come at a time when all human friendſhip is uſeleſs; what I ſuffer cannot be remedied, what I have loſt cannot be ſupplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whoſe tenderneſs I expected all the comforts of my age, died laſt night of a fever. My views, my purpoſes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being diſunited from ſociety."

"Sir, ſaid the prince, mortality is an event by which a wiſe man can never be ſurpriſed: we know that death is always near, and it ſhould therefore always be expected." "Young man, anſwered the

philoſopher, you ſpeak like one that has never felt the pangs of ſeparation." "Have you then forgot the precepts, ſaid Raſſelas, which you ſo powerfully enforced? Has wiſdom no ſtrength to arm the heart againſt calamity? Conſider, that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reaſon are always the ſame." "What comfort, ſaid the mourner, can truth and reaſon afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be reſtored?"

The prince, whoſe humanity would not ſuffer him to inſult miſery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptineſs of rhetorical ſound, and the inefficacy of poliſhed periods and ſtudied ſentences.

CHAP. XIX.

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.

HE was ſtill eager upon the ſame enquiry; and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the loweſt cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his ſanctity, reſolved to viſit his retreat, and enquire whether that felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in ſolitude; and whether a man, whoſe age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of ſhunning evils, or enduring them?

Imlac and the princeſs agreed to accompany him, and, after the neceſſary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where ſhepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the paſture. "This, ſaid the poet, is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence

tence and quiet; let us paſs the heat of the day among the ſhepherds tents, and know whether all our ſearches are not to terminate in paſtoral ſimplicity."

The propoſal pleaſed them, and they induced the ſhepherds, by ſmall preſents and familiar queſtions, to tell their opinion of their own ſtate: they were ſo rude and ignorant, ſo little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and ſo indiſtinct in their narratives and deſcriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with diſcontent; that they conſidered themſelves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with ſtupid malevolence toward thoſe that were placed above them.

The princeſs pronounced with vehemence, that ſhe would never ſuffer theſe envious ſavages to be her companions, and that ſhe ſhould not ſoon be deſirous of ſeeing any more ſpecimens of ruſtick happineſs; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleaſures were fabulous; and was yet in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be juſtly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, ſhe ſhould gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and liſten, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the ſhade.

CHAP. XX.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for ſhelter. At a ſmall diſtance they ſaw a thick wood, which they no ſooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The ſhrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the ſhades were darkeſt; the boughs of oppoſite trees were artificially interwoven; ſeats of flowery turf were raiſed in vacant ſpaces, and a rivulet, that wantoned along the ſide of a winding path, had its banks ſometimes opened into ſmall baſons, and its ſtream ſometimes obſtructed by little mounds of ſtone, heaped together to increaſe its murmurs.

They paſſed ſlowly through the wood, delighted with ſuch unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in thoſe rude and unfrequented regions, had leiſure and art for ſuch harmleſs luxury.

As they advanced they heard the ſound of muſick, and ſaw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going ſtill further, beheld a ſtately palace built upon a hill ſurrounded with woods. The laws of eaſtern hoſpitality allowed them to enter, and the maſter welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was ſkilful enough in appearances ſoon to diſcern that they were no common gueſts, and ſpread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught

caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domesticks cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh, "My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the Bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected against him by the princes of the country; but, as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the Bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted."

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

CHAP. XXI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peaſants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the ſide of a mountain, over-ſhadowed with palm-trees; at ſuch a diſtance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, ſuch as compoſed the mind to penſive meditation, eſpecially when it was aſſiſted by the wind whiſtling among the branches. The firſt rude eſſay of nature had been ſo much improved by human labour, that the cave contained ſeveral apartments appropriated to different uſes, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkneſs or tempeſts happened to overtake.

The hermit ſat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolneſs of the evening. On one ſide lay a book with pens and papers, on the other mechanical inſtruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princeſs obſerved that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happineſs.

They ſaluted him with great reſpect, which he repaid like a man not unaccuſtomed to the forms of courts. "My children, ſaid he, if you have loſt your way, you ſhall be willingly ſupplied with ſuch conveniencies for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell."

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleaſed with the neatneſs and regularity of the place. The hermit ſet fleſh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His diſcourſe was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthuſiaſm. He ſoon gained the eſteem of his gueſts, and the princeſs repented of her haſty cenſure.

At laſt Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is ſo far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wiſdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life*."

"To him that lives well, anſwered the hermit, every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove moſt certainly from evil, ſaid the prince, who ſhall devote himſelf to that ſolitude which you have recommended by your example."

"I have indeed lived fifteen years in ſolitude, ſaid the hermit, but have no deſire that my example ſhould gain any imitators. In my youth I profeſſed arms, and was raiſed by degrees to the higheſt military rank. I have traverſed wide countries at the head of my troops, and ſeen many battles and ſieges. At laſt, being diſguſted by the preferments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigour was beginning to decay, I was reſolved to cloſe my life in peace, having found the world full of ſnares, diſcord, and miſery. I had once eſcaped from the purſuit of the enemy by the ſhelter of this cavern, and therefore choſe it for my final reſidence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and ſtored it with all that I was likely to want.

"For ſome time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempeſt-beaten ſailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the ſudden change of the noiſe and hurry of war to ſtillneſs and repoſe. When the pleaſure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that enquiry is now grown taſteleſs and irkſome. I have been for ſome time unſettled and diſtracted: my mind is diſturbed with a thouſand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, becauſe I have no opportunities of relaxation or diverſion. I am ſometimes aſhamed to think that I could not ſecure myſelf from vice, but by retiring from the exerciſe of virtue, and begin to ſuſpect that I was rather impelled by reſentment, than led by devotion, into ſolitude. My fancy riots in ſcenes of folly, and I lament that I have loſt ſo much, and have gained ſo little. In ſolitude, if I eſcape the example of bad men, I want likewiſe the counſel and converſation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of ſociety, and reſolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a ſolitary man will be certainly miſerable, but not certainly devout."

They heard his reſolution with ſurpriſe, but after a ſhort pauſe, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a conſiderable treaſure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAP. XXII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO NATURE.

RASSELAS went often to an aſſembly of learned men, who met at ſtated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were ſomewhat coarſe, but their converſation was inſtructive, and their diſputations acute, though ſometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertiſt remembered upon what queſtion they began. Some faults were almoſt general among them: every one was deſirous to dictate to the reſt, and every one was pleaſed to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this aſſembly Raſſelas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him cenſure a courſe of life which he had ſo deliberately choſen, and ſo laudably followed. The ſentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been juſtly puniſhed by condemnation to perpetual perſeverance. One of the youngeſt among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of ſociety to the labour of individuals, and conſidered retirement as a deſertion of duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time when the claims of the publick were ſatisfied, and when a man might properly ſequeſter himſelf, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the reſt, thought it likely, that the hermit would,

would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if ſhame did not reſtrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world: "For the hope of happineſs, ſaid he, is ſo ſtrongly impreſſed, that the longeſt experience is not able to efface it. Of the preſent ſtate, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confeſs, the miſery; yet, when the ſame ſtate is again at a diſtance, imagination paints it as deſirable. But the time will ſurely come, when deſire will be no longer our torment, and no man ſhall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This, ſaid a philoſopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, is the preſent condition of a wiſe man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to enquire after happineſs, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that univerſal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impreſſed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by deſtiny, not inſtilled by education, but infuſed at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will ſuffer nothing from the deluſions of hope, or importunities of deſire: he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or ſuffer as the reaſon of things ſhall alternately preſcribe. Other men may amuſe themſelves with ſubtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wiſe by eaſier means: let them obſerve the hind of the foreſt, and the linnet of the grove: let them conſider the life of animals, whoſe motions are regu-

lated by inſtinct; they obey their guide and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, ceaſe to diſpute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with ſo much pride and pomp do not underſtand, and carry with us this ſimple and intelligible maxim, That deviation from nature is deviation from happineſs."

When he had ſpoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the conſciouſneſs of his own beneficence. "Sir, ſaid the prince, with great modeſty, as I, like all the reſt of mankind, am deſirous of felicity, my cloſeſt attention has been fixed upon your diſcourſe: I doubt not the truth of a poſition which a man ſo learned has ſo confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature."

"When I find young men ſo humble and ſo docile, ſaid the philoſopher, I can deny them no information which my ſtudies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitneſs ariſing from the relations and qualities of cauſes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable ſcheme of univerſal felicity; to co-operate with the general diſpoſition and tendency of the preſent ſyſtem of things."

The prince ſoon found that this was one of the ſages whom he ſhould underſtand leſs as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was ſilent, and the philoſopher, ſuppoſing him ſatisfied, and the reſt vanquiſhed, roſe up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the preſent ſyſtem.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further enquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

"We have hitherto, said she, known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestick peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life. Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress."

CHAP. XXIV.

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.

RASSELAS applauded the deſign, and appeared next day with a ſplendid retinue at the court of the Baſſa. He was ſoon diſtinguiſhed for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whoſe curioſity had brought him from diſtant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent converſation with the Baſſa himſelf.

He was at firſt inclined to believe, that the man muſt be pleaſed with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleaſure, ſaid he, equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thouſands all made happy by wiſe adminiſtration. Yet, ſince, by the law of ſubordination, this ſublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is ſurely reaſonable to think, that there is ſome ſatisfaction more popular and acceſſible, and that millions can hardly be ſubjected to the will of a ſingle man, only to fill his particular breaſt with incommunicable content."

Theſe thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no ſolution of the difficulty. But as preſents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almoſt every man who ſtood high in employment hated all the reſt, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual ſucceſſion of plots and detections, ſtratagems and eſcapes, faction and treachery.

treachery. Many of thoſe who ſurrounded the Baſſa, were ſent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering cenſure, and every eye was ſearching for a fault.

At laſt the letters of revocation arrived, the Baſſa was carried in chains to Conſtantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

"What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power, ſaid Raſſelas to his ſiſter; is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the ſubordinate degree only dangerous, and the ſupreme ſafe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the Sultan himſelf ſubject to the torments of ſuſpicion, and the dread of enemies?"

In a ſhort time the ſecond Baſſa was depoſed. The Sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janiſaries, and his ſucceſſor had other views and different favourites.

CHAP. XXV.

THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER ENQUIRY WITH MORE DILIGENCE THAN SUCCESS.

THE princeſs, in the mean time, inſinuated herſelf into many families; for there are few doors, through which liberality, joined with good-humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houſes were airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accuſtomed to the converſation of Imlac and her brother to be much pleaſed with childiſh levity, and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wiſhes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleaſures, poor as they

they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which solicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient; every thing floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future, so that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer, said she, great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest, through all

thy

thy courſe, a ſingle habitation from which thou doſt not hear the murmurs of complaint?"

"You are then, ſaid Raſſelas, not more ſucceſsful in private houſes than I have been in courts." "I have, ſince the laſt partition of our provinces, ſaid the princeſs, enabled myſelf to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the faireſt ſhew of proſperity and peace, and know not one houſe that is not haunted by ſome fury that deſtroys their quiet.

"I did not ſeek eaſe among the poor, becauſe I concluded that there it could not be found. But I ſaw many poor, whom I had ſuppoſed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances: it is often concealed in ſplendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the reſt: they ſupport themſelves by temporary expedients, and every day is loſt in contriving for the morrow.

"This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I ſaw with leſs pain, becauſe I could relieve it. Yet ſome have refuſed my bounties; more offended with my quickneſs to detect their wants, than pleaſed with my readineſs to ſuccour them: and others, whoſe exigencies compelled them to admit my kindneſs, have never been able to forgive their benefactreſs. Many, however, have been ſincerely grateful, without the oſtentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours."

CHAP. XXVI.

THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON PRIVATE LIFE.

NEKAYAH perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

"In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly difcord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewife is a little kingdom, torn with factions, and expofed to revolutions. An unpractifed obferver expects the love of parents and children to be conftant and equal; but this kindnefs feldom continues beyond the years of infancy: in a fhort time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debafed by envy.

"Parents and children feldom act in concert: each child endeavours to appropriate the efteem or fondnefs of the parents, and the parents, with yet lefs temptation, betray each other to their children; thus fome place their confidence in the father, and fome in the mother, and by degrees, the houfe is filled with artifices and feuds.

"The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally oppofite, by the contrary effects of hope and defpondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either fide. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in fpring and winter. And how can children credit the affertions of parents, which their own eyes fhow them to be falfe?

"Few parents act in ſuch a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man truſts wholly to ſlow contrivance and gradual progreſſion: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himſelf to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openneſs and candour: but his father, having ſuffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to ſuſpect, and too often allured to practiſe it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the ſcrupuloſity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greateſt part, live on to love leſs and leſs: and, if thoſe whom nature has thus cloſely united are the torments of each other, where ſhall we look for tenderneſs and conſolation?"

"Surely, ſaid the prince, you muſt have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the moſt tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural neceſſity."

"Domeſtick diſcord, anſwered ſhe, is not inevitably and fatally neceſſary; but yet it is not eaſily avoided. We ſeldom ſee that a whole family is virtuous: the good and evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet leſs agree with one another: even the virtuous fall ſometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, thoſe parents have moſt reverence

verence who moſt deſerve it: for he that lives well cannot be deſpiſed.

"Many other evils infeſt private life. Some are the ſlaves of ſervants whom they have truſted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety to the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot pleaſe, and dare not offend. Some huſbands are imperious, and ſome wives perverſe: and, as it is always more eaſy to do evil than good, though the wiſdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miſerable."

"If ſuch be the general effect of marriage, ſaid the prince, I ſhall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my intereſt with that of another, leſt I ſhould be unhappy by my partner's fault."

"I have met, ſaid the princeſs, with many who live ſingle for that reaſon; but I never found that their prudence ought to raiſe envy. They dream away their time without friendſhip, without fondneſs, and are driven to rid themſelves of the day, for which they have no uſe, by childiſh amuſements, or vicious delights. They act as beings under the conſtant ſenſe of ſome known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with cenſure. They are peeviſh at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their buſineſs and their pleaſure to diſturb that ſociety which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting ſympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without taſting the balm of pity, is a ſtate more gloomy than ſolitude:

tude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

"What then is to be done? said Rasselas; the more we enquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself that has no other inclination to regard."

CHAP. XXVII.

DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS.

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her, that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and supposed misery where she did not find it. "Your narrative, says he, throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance; whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one he will offend another: those that are not favoured will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented."

"The

"The difcontent, faid the princefs, which is thus unreafonable, I hope that I fhall always have fpirit to defpife, and you, power to reprefs."

"Difcontent, anfwered Raffelas, will not always be without reafon under the moft juft and vigilant adminiftration of publick affairs. None, however attentive, can always difcover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obfcure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that fees inferiour defert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can fcarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to perfift for ever in the fixed and inexorable juftice of diftribution; he will fometimes indulge his own affections, and fometimes thofe of his favourites; he will permit fome to pleafe him who can never ferve him; he will difcover in thofe whom he loves, qualities which in reality they do not poffefs; and to thofe, from whom he receives pleafure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations fometimes prevail which were purchafed by money, or by the more deftructive bribery of flattery and fervility.

"He that has much to do will do fomething wrong, and of that wrong muft fuffer the confequences; and, if it were poffible that he fhould always act rightly, yet when fuch numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will cenfure and obftruct him by malevolence, and the good fometimes by miftake.

"The higheſt ſtations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happineſs, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to ſeats of humble privacy and placid obſcurity. For what can hinder the ſatisfaction, or intercept the expectations, of him whoſe abilities are adequate to his employments, who ſees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooſes by his own knowledge all whom he truſts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy."

"Whether perfect happineſs would be procured by perfect goodneſs, ſaid Nekayah, this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at leaſt, may be maintained, that we do not always find viſible happineſs in proportion to viſible virtue. All natural, and almoſt all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the miſery of a famine, and not much diſtinguiſhed in the fury of a faction; they ſink together in a tempeſt, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietneſs of conſcience, a ſteady proſpect of a happier ſtate; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience muſt ſuppoſe pain."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE THEIR CONVERSATION.

"DEAR princess, said Rasselas, you fall into the common errours of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

"On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestick evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negociating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plow forward; the necessaries of life are required and obtained; and the successive business

of the ſeaſons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

"Let us ceaſe to conſider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it ſhall happen, will laugh at human ſpeculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the deſtiny of kingdoms. It is our buſineſs to conſider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happineſs, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happineſs of others.

"Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women are made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be perſuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happineſs."

"I know not, ſaid the princeſs, whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human miſery. When I ſee and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected cauſes of laſting diſcord, the diverſities of temper, the oppoſitions of opinion, the rude colliſions of contrary deſire where both are urged by violent impulſes, the obſtinate conteſts of diſagreeable virtues, where both are ſupported by conſciouſneſs of good intention, I am ſometimes diſpoſed to think with the ſeverer caſuiſts of moſt nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the inſtigation of a paſſion too much indulged, entangle themſelves with indiſſoluble compacts."

"You ſeem to forget, replied Raſſelas, that you have, even now, repreſented celibacy as leſs happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worſt. Thus it happens when

wrong

wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually deftroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth."

"I did not expect, anfwered the princefs, to hear that imputed to falfehood which is the confequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactnefs objects vaft in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we fee or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the difcriminations, and decide the preference: but of two fyftems, of which neither can be furveyed by any human being in its full compafs of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder that judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other as either preffes on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourfelves juft as we differ from each other, when we fee only part of the queftion, as in the multifarious relations of politicks and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add, faid the prince, to the other evils of life, the bitternefs of controverfy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in fubtilties of argument. We are employed in a fearch, of which both are equally to enjoy the fuccefs, or fuffer by the mifcarriage. It is therefore fit that we affift each other. You furely conclude too haftily from the infelicity of marriage againft its inftitution: will not the mifery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of Heaven? The world muft be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How

" How the world is to be peopled, returned Nekayah, is not my care, and needs not be yours. I ſee no danger that the preſent generation ſhould omit to leave ſucceſſors behind them: we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourſelves."

CHAP. XXIX.

THE DEBATE OF MARRIAGE CONTINUED.

" THE good of the whole, ſays Raſſelas, is the ſame with the good of all its parts. If marriage be beſt for mankind, it muſt be evidently beſt for individuals, or a permanent and neceſſary duty muſt be the cauſe of evil, and ſome muſt be inevitably ſacrificed to the convenience of others. In the eſtimate which you have made of the two ſtates, it appears that the incommodities of a ſingle life are, in a great meaſure, neceſſary and certain, but thoſe of the conjugal ſtate accidental and avoidable.

" I cannot forbear to flatter myſelf, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cauſe of general complaint. Whan can be expected but diſappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of deſire, without judgment, without foreſight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, ſimilarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of ſentiment?

" Such is the common proceſs of marriage. A youth or maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having

Having little to divert attention, or diverſify thought, they find themſelves uneaſy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they ſhall be happy together. They marry, and diſcover what nothing but voluntary blindneſs before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

" From thoſe early marriages proceeds likewiſe the rivalry of parents and children: the ſon is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forſake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wiſh for the abſence of the other.

" Surely all theſe evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence preſcribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleaſures life may be well enough ſupported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increaſe experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and ſelection: one advantage, at leaſt, will be certain; the parents will be viſibly older than their children."

" What reaſon cannot collect, ſaid Nekayah, and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a queſtion too important to be neglected, and I have often propoſed it to thoſe, whoſe accuracy of remark, and comprehenſiveneſs of knowledge, made their ſuffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined, that it is dangerous for a man and woman to ſuſpend their fate upon each

other,

other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are eſtabliſhed; when friendſhips have been contracted on both ſides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own proſpects.

"It is ſcarcely poſſible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, ſhould have been both directed to the ſame path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which cuſtom has made pleaſing. When the deſultory levity of youth has ſettled into regularity, it is ſoon ſucceeded by pride aſhamed to yield, or obſtinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual eſteem produces mutual deſire to pleaſe, time itſelf, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewiſe the direction of the paſſions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long cuſtoms are not eaſily broken: he that attempts to change the courſe of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how ſhall we do that for others, which we are ſeldom able to do for ourſelves?"

"But ſurely, interpoſed the prince, you ſuppoſe the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I ſhall ſeek a wife, it ſhall be my firſt queſtion, whether ſhe be willing to be led by reaſon?"

"Thus it is, ſaid Nekayah, that philoſophers are deceived. There are a thouſand familiar diſputes which reaſon never can decide; queſtions that elude inveſtigation, and make logick ridiculous; caſes where ſomething muſt be done, and where little can be ſaid. Conſider the ſtate of mankind, and inquire how few can be ſuppoſed to act upon any

occaſions,

occaſions, whether ſmall or great, with all the reaſons of action preſent to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedneſs, who ſhould be doomed to adjuſt by reaſon, every morning, all the minute detail of a domeſtick day.

" Thoſe who marry at an advanced age, will probably eſcape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpleſs, to a guardian's mercy: or, if that ſhould not happen, they muſt at leaſt go out of the world before they ſee thoſe whom they love beſt either wiſe or great.

" From their children, if they have leſs to fear, they have leſs alſo to hope, and they loſe, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds ſuſceptible of new impreſſions, which might wear away their diſſimilitudes by long cohabitation, as ſoft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their ſurfaces to each other.

" I believe it will be found that thoſe who marry late are beſt pleaſed with their children, and thoſe who marry early with their partners."

" The union of theſe two affections, ſaid Raſſelas, would produce all that could be wiſhed. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the huſband."

" Every hour, anſwered the princeſs, confirms my prejudice in favour of the poſition ſo often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, 'That nature ſets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Thoſe conditions, which flatter hope and attract deſire, are ſo conſti-

tuted,

tuted, that, as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods ſo oppoſed that we cannot ſeize both, but, by too much prudence, may paſs between them at too great a diſtance to reach either. This is often the fate of long conſideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourſelf with contrarieties of pleaſure. Of the bleſſings ſet before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taſte the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his ſcent with the flowers of the ſpring: no man can, at the ſame time, fill his cup from the ſource and from the mouth of the Nile.

CHAP. XXX.

IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE CONVERSATION.

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac, ſaid Raſſelas, I have been taking from the princeſs the diſmal hiſtory of private life, and am almoſt diſcouraged from further ſearch."

"It ſeems to me, ſaid Imlac, that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a ſingle city, which, however large and diverſified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earlieſt monarchies for the power and wiſdom of its inhabitants; a country where the ſciences firſt dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil ſociety or domeſtick life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of induſtry and power, before which all European

European magnificence is confeſſed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the ſchools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has ſpared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has deſtroyed."

"My curioſity, ſaid Raſſelas, does not very ſtrongly lead me to ſurvey piles of ſtone, or mounds of earth; my buſineſs is with man. I came hither not to meaſure fragments of temples, or trace choaked aqueducts, but to look upon the various ſcenes of the preſent world."

"The things that are now before us, ſaid the princeſs, require attention, and deſerve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whoſe form of life was different from all that the preſent condition of mankind requires or allows?"

"To know any thing, returned the poet, we muſt know its effects; to ſee men we muſt ſee their works, that we may learn what reaſon has dictated or paſſion has incited, and find what are the moſt powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the preſent we muſt oppoſe it to the paſt; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the preſent: recollection and anticipation fill up almoſt all our moments. Our paſſions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the paſt is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred reſpect the paſt, for the cauſe muſt have been before the effect.

"The prefent ftate of things is the confequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the fources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we fuffer. If we act only for ourfelves, to neglect the ftudy of hiftory is not prudent: if we are intrufted with the care of others, it is not juft. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refufed to learn how he might prevent it.

"There is no part of hiftory fo generally ufeful as that which relates the progrefs of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reafon, the fucceffive advances of fcience, the viciffitudes of learning and ignorance which are the light and darknefs of thinking beings, the extinction and refufcitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invafions are peculiarly the bufinefs of princes, the ufeful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; thofe who have kingdoms to govern, have underftandings to cultivate.

"Example is always more efficacious than precept. A foldier is formed in war, and a painter muft copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are feldom feen, but the labours of art are always at hand for thofe who defire to know what art has been able to perform.

"When the eye or the imagination is ftruck with an uncommon work, the next tranfition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true ufe of fuch contemplation; we enlarge our comprehenfion by new ideas, and perhaps recover fome art loft to mankind, or learn what is lefs perfectly known in our

own country. At leaſt we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the firſt motion towards good, diſcover our defects."

"I am willing, ſaid the prince, to ſee all that can deſerve my ſearch." "And I, ſaid the princeſs, ſhall rejoice to learn ſomething of the manners of antiquity."

The moſt pompous monument of Egyptian greatneſs, and one of the moſt bulky works of manual induſtry, ſaid Imlac, are the pyramids; fabricks raiſed before the time of hiſtory, and of which the earlieſt narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of theſe the greateſt is ſtill ſtanding very little injured by time."

"Let us viſit them to-morrow, ſaid Nekayah. I have often heard of the pyramids, and ſhall not reſt till I have ſeen them within and without with my own eyes."

CHAP. XXX.

THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.

THE reſolution being thus taken, they ſet out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being reſolved to ſtay among the pyramids till their curioſity was fully ſatisfied. They travelled gently, turned aſide to every thing remarkable, ſtopped from time to time and converſed with the inhabitants, and obſerved the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were aſtoniſhed at the extent of the baſe, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was choſen for a fabrick intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he ſhewed that its gradual diminution gave it ſuch ſtability, as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could ſcarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themſelves, the leaſt reſiſtible of natural violence. A concuſſion that ſhould ſhatter the pyramid would threaten the diſſolution of the continent.

They meaſured all its dimenſions and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments, and having hired the common guides climbed up to the firſt paſſage, when the favourite of the princeſs, looking into the cavity, ſtepped back and trembled. "Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance, anſwered the lady, and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which muſt ſurely be inhabited by unquiet ſouls. The original poſſeſſors of theſe dreadful vaults will ſtart up before us, and perhaps ſhut us in for ever." She ſpoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her miſtreſs.

"If all your fear be of apparitions, ſaid the prince, I will promiſe you ſafety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be ſeen no more."

"That the dead are ſeen no more, ſaid Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain, againſt the concurrent and unvaried teſtimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned,

among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffuſed, could become univerſal only by its truth: thoſe, that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by ſingle cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and ſome who deny it with their tongues confeſs it by their fears.

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrours to thoſe which have already ſeized upon Pekuah. There can be no reaſon why ſpectres ſhould haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they ſhould have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them?"

"My dear Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, I will always go before you, and Imlac ſhall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princeſs of Abiſſinia."

"If the princeſs is pleaſed that her ſervant ſhould die, returned the lady, let her command ſome death leſs dreadful than encloſure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not diſobey you: I muſt go if you command me; but, if I once enter, I never ſhall come back."

The princeſs ſaw that her fear was too ſtrong for expoſtulation or reproof, and embracing her, told her that ſhe ſhould ſtay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was yet not ſatisfied, but entreated the princeſs not to purſue ſo dreadful a purpoſe as

that of entering the receſſes of the pyramid. "Though I cannot teach courage, ſaid Nekayah, I muſt not learn cowardice; nor leave at laſt undone what I came hither only to do."

CHAP. XXXI.

THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID.

PEKUAH deſcended to the tents, and the reſt entered the pyramid: they paſſed through the galleries, ſurveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the cheſt in which the body of the founder is ſuppoſed to have been repoſited. They then ſat down in one of the moſt ſpacious chambers to reſt a while before they attempted to return.

"We have now, ſaid Imlac, gratified our minds with an exact view of the greateſt work of man, except the wall of China.

"Of the wall it is very eaſy to aſſign the motive. It ſecured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incurſions of Barbarians, whoſe unſkilfulneſs in arts made it eaſier for them to ſupply their wants by rapine than by induſtry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures deſcend upon domeſtick fowl. Their celerity and fierceneſs made the wall neceſſary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

"But for the pyramids no reaſon has ever been given adequate to the coſt and labour of the work. The narrowneſs of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treaſures might have been repoſited at far leſs expence with equal

equal ſecurity. It ſeems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys inceſſantly upon life, and muſt be always appeaſed by ſome employment. Thoſe who have already all that they can enjoy, muſt enlarge their deſires. He that has built for uſe, till uſe is ſupplied, muſt begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmoſt power of human performance, that he may not be ſoon reduced to form another wiſh.

"I conſider this mighty ſtructure as a monument of the inſufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whoſe power is unlimited, and whoſe treaſures ſurmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to ſolace, by the erection of a pyramid, the ſatiety of dominion and taſteleſsneſs of pleaſures, and to amuſe the tedioufneſs of declining life, by ſeeing thouſands labouring without end, and one ſtone, for no purpoſe, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imagineſt happineſs in royal magnificence, and dreameſt that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, ſurvey the pyramids, and confeſs thy folly!"

CHAP XXXII.

THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNE.

THEY roſe up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princeſs prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths, and coſtly rooms, and of the different

impreſſions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one ſilent and dejected: the men diſcovered ſhame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired. "You had ſcarcely entered into the pyramid, ſaid one of the attendants, when a troop of Arabs ruſhed upon us: we were too few to reſiſt them, and too ſlow to eſcape. They were about to ſearch the tents, ſet us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of ſome Turkiſh horſemen put them to flight; but they ſeized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now purſuing them by our inſtigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them."

The princeſs was overpowered with ſurpriſe and grief. Raſſelas, in the firſt heat of his reſentment, ordered his ſervants to follow him, and prepared to purſue the robbers with his ſabre in his hand. "Sir, ſaid Imlac, what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horſes trained to battle and retreat; we have only beaſts of burden. By leaving our preſent ſtation we may loſe the princeſs, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a ſhort time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princeſs burſt out into new lamentations, and Raſſelas could ſcarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the eſcape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have reſigned them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer ſtay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curioſity, cenſuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own raſhneſs which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expepedients by which the loſs of Pekuah might have been prevented, and reſolving to do ſomething for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happineſs in the world for a long time, and might reaſonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that ſome good would befall her whereſoever ſhe was, and that their miſtreſs would find another friend who might ſupply her place.

The princeſs made them no anſwer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was loſt.

Next day the prince preſented to the Baſſa a memorial of the wrong which he had ſuffered, and a petition for redreſs. The Baſſa threatened to puniſh the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor indeed, could any account or deſcription be given by which he might direct the purſuit.

It ſoon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accuſtomed to hear of

more crimes than they can punifh, and more wrongs than they can redrefs, fet themfelves at eafe by indifcriminate negligence, and prefently forget the requeft when they lofe fight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain fome intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correfpondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of thefe, fome were furnifhed with money for their journey, and came back no more; fome were liberally paid for accounts which a few days difcovered to be falfe. But the princefs would not fuffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While fhe was doing fomething fhe kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was fuggefted; when one meffenger returned unfuccefsful, another was difpatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now paffed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavoured to raife in each other grew more languid, and the princefs, when fhe faw nothing more to be tried, funk down inconfolable in hopelefs dejection. A thoufand times fhe reproached herfelf with the eafy compliance, by which fhe permitted her favourite to ftay behind her. "Had not my fondnefs, faid fhe, leffened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrours. She ought to have feared me more than fpectres. A fevere look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did foolifh indulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not fpeak and refufe to hear?

"Great

"Great princefs, faid Imlac, do not reproach yourfelf for your virtue, or confider that as blameable by which evil has accidentally been caufed. Your tendernefs for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to him by whofe laws our actions are governed, and who will fuffer none to be finally punifhed for obedience. When, in profpect of fome good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prefcribed us, we withdraw from the direction of fuperior wifdom, and take all confequences upon ourfelves. Man cannot fo far know the connexion of caufes and events, as that he may venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we purfue our end by lawful means, we may always confole our mifcarriage by the hope of future recompence. When we confult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the fettled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by fuccefs, becaufe we cannot efcape the confcioufnefs of our fault: but, if we mifcarry, the difappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortlefs is the forrow of him who feels at once the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him?

"Confider, princefs, what would have been your condition, if the lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and being compelled to ftay in the tents, had been carried away; or how would you have borne the thought, if you had forced her into the pyramid, and fhe had died before you in agonies of terrour?"

"Had

"Had either happened, ſaid Nekayah, I could not have endured life till now: I ſhould have been tortured to madneſs by the remembrance of ſuch cruelty, or muſt have pined away in abhorrence of myſelf."

"This at leaſt, ſaid Imlac, is the preſent reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky conſequence can oblige us to repent it."

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE PRINCESS LANGUISHES FOR WANT OF PEKUAH.

NEKAYAH being thus reconciled to herſelf, found that no evil is inſupportable but that which is accompanied with conſciouſneſs of wrong. She was, from that time, delivered from the violence of tempeſtuous ſorrow, and ſunk into ſilent penſiveneſs and gloomy tranquillity. She ſat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or ſaid by her Pekuah, treaſured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had ſet an accidental value, and which might recal to mind any little incident or careleſs converſation. The ſentiments of her, whom ſhe now expected to ſee no more, were treaſured in her memory as rules of life, and ſhe deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occaſion what would have been the opinion and counſel of Pekuah.

The women, by whom ſhe was attended, knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore ſhe could not talk to them but with caution and reſerve. She began to remit her curioſity, having no great care

to collect notions which ſhe had no convenience of uttering. Raſſelas endeavoured firſt to comfort, and afterwards to divert her; he hired muſicians, to whom ſhe ſeemed to liſten, but did not hear them, and procured maſters to inſtruct her in various arts, whoſe lectures, when they viſited her again, were again to be repeated. She had loſt her taſte of pleaſure, and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into ſhort excurſions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earneſtly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was aſked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till not being able to return the princeſs the anſwer that ſhe deſired, he was leſs and leſs willing to come into her preſence. She obſerved his backwardneſs, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not, ſaid ſhe, to confound impatience with reſentment, or to ſuppoſe that I charge you with negligence, becauſe I repine at your unſucceſsfulneſs. I do not much wonder at your abſence; I know that the unhappy are never pleaſing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of miſery. To hear complaints is weariſome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the ſhort gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is ſtruggling under his own evils, will add to them the miſeries of another?

"The time is at hand, when none ſhall be diſturbed any longer by the ſighs of Nekayah: my ſearch after happineſs is now at an end. I am reſolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myſelf in ſolitude without

any

any other care than to compoſe my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a conſtant ſucceſſion of innocent occupations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly deſires, I ſhall enter into that ſtate, to which all are haſtening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendſhip of Pekuah."

" Do not entangle your mind, ſaid Imlac, by irrevocable determinations, nor increaſe the burthen of life by a voluntary accumulation of miſery : the wearineſs of retirement will continue or increaſe when the loſs of Pekuah is forgotten That you have been deprived of one pleaſure, is no very good reaſon for rejection of the reſt."

" Since Pekuah was taken from me, ſaid the princeſs, I have no pleaſure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or truſt has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happineſs. We may, perhaps, allow that what ſatisfaction this world can afford, muſt ariſe from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodneſs : wealth is nothing but as it is beſtowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated : they muſt therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them ? Goodneſs affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodneſs may be practiſed in retirement."

" How far ſolitude may admit goodneſs, or advance it, I ſhall not, replied Imlac, diſpute at preſent. Remember the confeſſion of the pious hermit. You will wiſh to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts."

" That time, ſaid Nekayah, will never come. The generous frankneſs, the modeſt obſequiouſneſs, and the

the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more missed, as I shall live longer to see vice and folly."

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity, said Imlac, is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled: yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

"At least, said the prince, do not despair before all remedies have been tried: the enquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that

that you will promiſe to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable reſolution."

Nekayah thought this a reaſonable demand, and made the promiſe to her brother, who had been adviſed by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah, but he ſuppoſed, that if he could ſecure the interval of a year, the princeſs would be then in no danger of a cloiſter.

CHAP. XXXV.

PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED. THE PROGRESS OF SORROW.

NEKAYAH, ſeeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promiſe, ſet her intention of retirement at a diſtance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleaſures. She rejoiced without her own conſent at the ſuſpenſion of her ſorrows, and ſometimes caught herſelf with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet ſhe reſolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondneſs of Pekuah, and for ſome weeks retired conſtantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes ſwollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees ſhe grew leſs ſcrupulous, and ſuffered any important and preſſing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to leſs occaſions; ſometimes forgot what ſhe was indeed afraid to remember, and, at

laſt,

laſt, wholly releaſed herſelf from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminiſhed. A thouſand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thouſand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendſhip can ſupply, made her frequently regretted. She, therefore, ſolicited Imlac never to deſiſt from enquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at leaſt, ſhe might have the comfort of knowing that ſhe did not ſuffer by negligence or ſluggiſhneſs. "Yet what, ſaid ſhe, is to be expected from our purſuit of happineſs, when we find the ſtate of life to be ſuch, that happineſs itſelf is the cauſe of miſery? Why ſhould we endeavour to attain that, of which the poſſeſſion cannot be ſecured? I ſhall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondneſs, however tender, leſt I ſhould loſe again what I have loſt in Pekuah."

CHAP. XXXVI.

THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF PEKUAH.

IN ſeven months, one of the meſſengers, who had been ſent away upon the day when the promiſe was drawn from the princeſs, returned, after many unſucceſsful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who poſſeſſed a caſtle or fortreſs on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whoſe revenue was plunder, was willing to reſtore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The

The price was no ſubject of debate. The princeſs was in extaſies when ſhe heard that her favourite was alive, and might ſo cheaply be ranſomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happineſs or her own, but entreated her brother to ſend back the meſſenger with the ſum required. Imlac being conſulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relator, and was ſtill more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally truſted, detain at once, the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themſelves in the power of the Arab, by going into his diſtrict, and could not expect that the Rover would ſo much expoſe himſelf as to come into the lower country, where he might be ſeized by the forces of the Baſſa.

It is difficult to negociate where neither will truſt. But Imlac, after ſome deliberation, directed the meſſenger to propoſe that Pekuah ſhould be conducted by ten horſemen to the monaſtery of St. Antony, which is ſituated in the deſerts of Upper-Egypt, where ſhe ſhould be met by the ſame number, and her ranſom ſhould be paid.

That no time might be loſt, as they expected that the propoſal would not be refuſed, they immediately began their journey to the monaſtery; and, when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former meſſenger to the Arab's fortreſs. Raſſelas was deſirous to go with them; but neither his ſiſter nor Imlac would conſent. The Arab, according to the cuſtom of his nation, obſerved the laws of hoſpitality with great exactneſs to thoſe who put themſelves into his power, and, in a few days, brought

brought Pekuah with her maids, by eaſy journies, to the place appointed, where receiving the ſtipulated price, he reſtored her with great reſpect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princeſs and her favourite embraced each other with tranſport too violent to be expreſſed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderneſs in ſecret, and exchange profeſſions of kindneſs and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the preſence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the hiſtory of her adventures.

CHAP. XXXVII.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH.

"AT what time, and in what manner, I was forced away, ſaid Pekuah, your ſervants have told you. The ſuddenneſs of the event ſtruck me with ſurpriſe, and I was at firſt rather ſtupified than agitated with any paſſion of either fear or ſorrow. My confuſion was increaſed by the ſpeed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it ſeemed, ſoon deſpaired to overtake us, or were afraid of thoſe whom they made a ſhew of menacing.

"When the Arabs ſaw themſelves out of danger they ſlackened their courſe, and as I was leſs haraſſed by external violence, I began to feel more uneaſineſs in my mind. After ſome time we ſtopped

near a ſpring ſhaded with trees in a pleaſant meadow, where we were ſet upon the ground, and offered ſuch refreſhments as our maſters were partaking. I was ſuffered to ſit with my maids apart from the reſt, and none attempted to comfort or inſult us. Here I firſt began to feel the full weight of my miſery. The girls ſat weeping in ſilence, and from time to time looked on me for ſuccour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and ſavages, and had no reaſon to ſuppoſe that their pity was more than their juſtice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of deſire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kiſſed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, ſince we were now carried beyond purſuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

"When we were to be ſet again on horſeback, my maids clung round me, and refuſed to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate thoſe who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathleſs country, and came by moon-light to the ſide of a hill, where the reſt of the troop was ſtationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

"We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their huſbands in the expedition. They ſet before us the ſupper

which

which they had provided, and I eat it rather to encourage my maids, than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they ſpread the carpets for repoſe. I was weary, and hoped to find in ſleep that remiſſion of diſtreſs which nature ſeldom denies. Ordering myſelf therefore to be undreſt, I obſerved that the women looked very earneſtly upon me, not expecting, I ſuppoſe, to ſee me ſo ſubmiſſively attended. When my upper veſt was taken off, they were apparently ſtruck with the ſplendour of my clothes, and one of them timorouſly laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and, in a ſhort time, came back with another woman, who ſeemed to be of higher rank, and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the uſual act of reverence, and taking me by the hand, placed me in a ſmaller tent, ſpread with finer carpets, where I ſpent the night quietly with my maids.

" In the morning, as I was ſitting on the graſs, the chief of the troop came towards me. I roſe up to receive him, and he bowed with great reſpect. " Illuſtrious lady, ſaid he, my fortune is better than I had preſumed to hope; I am told by my women, that I have a princeſs in my camp." " Sir, anſwered I, your women have deceived themſelves and you; I am not a princeſs, but an unhappy ſtranger who intended ſoon to have left this country, in which I am now to be impriſoned for ever." " Whoever, or whenceſoever, you are, returned the Arab, your dreſs, and that of your ſervants, ſhew your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why ſhould you, who can ſo eaſily procure your

 ranſom,

ranſom, think yourſelf in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpoſe of my incurſions is to increaſe my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The ſons of Iſhmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is uſurped by late invaders, and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the ſword what is denied to juſtice. The violence of war admits no diſtinction; the lance that is lifted at guilt and power, will ſometimes fall on innocence and gentleneſs."

"How little, ſaid I, did I expect that yeſterday it ſhould have fallen upon me!"

"Misfortunes, anſwered the Arab, ſhould always be expected. If the eye of hoſtility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction ſpread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be diſconſolate: I am not one of the lawleſs and cruel rovers of the deſert; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ranſom, give a paſſport to your meſſenger, and perform my ſtipulation with nice punctuality."

"You will eaſily believe that I was pleaſed with his courteſy: and finding that his predominant paſſion was deſire of money, I began now to think my danger leſs, for I knew that no ſum would be thought too great for the releaſe of Pekuah. I told him, that he ſhould have no reaſon to charge me with ingratitude, if I was uſed with kindneſs, and that any ranſom which could be expected for a maid of common rank, would be paid; but that

he

she muſt not perſiſt to rate me as a princeſs. He ſaid, he would conſider what he ſhould demand, and then ſmiling, bowed and retired.

" Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themſelves were ſerved with reverence. We travelled onward by ſhort journies. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ranſom muſt be two hundred ounces of gold; which I not only promiſed him, but told him, that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated.

" I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or ſhorter as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I choſe to reſt. We now had camels and other conveniences for travel, my own women were always at my ſide, and I amuſed myſelf with obſerving the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which theſe deſerted countries appear to have been, in ſome diſtant age, laviſhly embelliſhed.

" The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate: he was able to travel by the ſtars or the compaſs, and had marked, in his erratick expeditions, ſuch places as are moſt worthy the notice of a paſſenger. He obſerved to me, that buildings are always beſt preſerved in places little frequented, and difficult of acceſs: for, when once a country declines from its primitive ſplendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls ſupply ſtones more eaſily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demoliſhed, to make ſtables of granate, and cottages of porphyry.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED.

"WE wandered about in this manner for some weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terrour, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which sooths the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way; bring money and nothing is denied.

"At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house built with stone in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropick. "Lady, said the Arab, you shall rest after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation

pation is war: I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger." He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

" Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terrour, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile, but no such beings ever appeared, and the Arab, when I enquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

" At night the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please

pleafe my inftructor, who valued himfelf for his fkill; and, in a little while, I found fome employment requifite to beguile the tedioufnefs of time, which was to be paffed always amidft the fame objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening: I therefore was at laft willing to obferve the ftars rather than do nothing, but could not always compofe my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the fky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleafure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happinefs that we fhould all enjoy at the end of our captivity."

"There were women in your Arab's fortrefs, faid the princefs, why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their converfation, and partake their diverfions? In a place where they found bufinefs or amufement, why fhould you alone fit corroded with idle melancholy? or why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diverfions of the women, anfwered Pekuah, were only childifh play, by which the mind, accuftomed to ftronger operations, could not be kept bufy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely fenfitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the fake of motion, as lambs frifk in a meadow. One fometimes pretended to be hurt, that the reft might be alarmed;

ed; or hid herſelf, that another might ſeek her. Part of their time paſſed in watching the progreſs of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the ſky.

"Their buſineſs was only needle-work, in which I and my maids ſometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will eaſily ſtraggle from the fingers, nor will you ſuſpect that captivity and abſence from Nekayah could receive ſolace from ſilken flowers.

"Nor was much ſatisfaction to be hoped from their converſation: for of what could they be expected to talk? They had ſeen nothing; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow ſpot: of what they had not ſeen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for any thing but their clothes and their food. As I bore a ſuperiour character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amuſed me to hear the complaints of each againſt the reſt, I might have been often detained by long ſtories; but the motives of their animoſity were ſo ſmall that I could not liſten without intercepting the tale."

"How, ſaid Raſſelas, can the Arab, whom you repreſented as a man of more than common accompliſhments, take any pleaſure in his ſeraglio when it is filled only with women like theſe? Are they exquiſitely beautiful?

"They

"They do not, said Pekuah, want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty which may subsist without spritelines or sublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him he looked on them with inattentive superiority: when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life: as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow."

"You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy, said Imlac, that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?"

"I am inclined to believe, answered Pekuah, that he was for some time in suspense; for, notwith-

standing

ſtanding his promiſe, whenever I propoſed to diſpatch a meſſenger to Cairo, he found ſome excuſe for delay. While I was detained in his houſe he made many incurſions into the neighbouring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refuſed to diſcharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wiſhes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my obſervations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the ſtars. When I importuned him to ſend away my letters, he ſoothed me with profeſſions of honour and ſincerity; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his abſence. I was much afflicted by this ſtudied procraſtination, and was ſometimes afraid that I ſhould be forgotten; that you would leave Cairo, and I muſt end my days in an iſland of the Nile.

"I grew at laſt hopeleſs and dejected, and cared ſo little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he ſhould fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleaſed with the growing friendſhip. My anxiety was not long; for, as I recovered ſome degree of cheerfulneſs, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to deſpiſe my former uneaſineſs.

"He ſtill delayed to ſend for my ranſom, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He haſtened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of

an inteſtine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the houſe, who diſmiſſed me with cold indifference."

Nekayah having heard her favourite's relation, roſe and embraced her, and Raſſelas gave her an hundred ounces of gold, which ſhe preſented to the Arab for the fifty that were promiſed.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were ſo well pleaſed at finding themſelves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himſelf to ſcience, and paſs the reſt of his days in literary ſolitude.

"Before you make your final choice, anſwered Imlac, you ought to examine its hazards, and converſe with ſome of thoſe who are grown old in the company of themſelves. I have juſt left the obſervatory of one of the moſt learned aſtronomers in the world, who has ſpent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celeſtial bodies, and has drawn out his ſoul in endleſs calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his diſcoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas, and fluent converſation, are commonly welcome to thoſe whoſe thoughts have been long fixed upon a ſingle point, and who find the images of other things ſtealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he

ſmiled

ſmiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the conſtellations, and deſcend for a moment into the lower world.

"On the next day of vacation I renewed my viſit, and was ſo fortunate as to pleaſe him again. He relaxed from that time the ſeverity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always buſy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was deſirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cauſe of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehenſion is vaſt, his memory capacious and retentive, his diſcourſe is methodical, and his expreſſion clear.

"His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepeſt reſearches and moſt favourite ſtudies are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counſel or his riches. To his cloſeſt retreat, at his moſt buſy moments, all are admitted that want his aſſiſtance: "For though I exclude idleneſs and pleaſure, I will never, ſays he, bar my doors againſt charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the ſkies, but the practice of virtue is commanded."

"Surely, ſaid the princeſs, this man is happy."

"I viſited him, ſaid Imlac, with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his converſation: he was ſublime without haughtineſs, courteous without formality, and communicative without oſtentation. I was at firſt, great princeſs, of your opinion, thought him the happieſt of mankind,

and

and often congratulated him on the bleſſing that he enjoyed. He ſeemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praiſes of his condition, to which he always returned a general anſwer, and diverted the converſation to ſome other topick.

"Amidſt this willingneſs to be pleaſed, and labour to pleaſe, I had quickly reaſon to imagine that ſome painful ſentiment preſſed upon his mind. He often looked up earneſtly towards the ſun, and let his voice fall in the midſt of his diſcourſe. He would ſometimes when we were alone, gaze upon me in ſilence with the air of a man who longed to ſpeak what he was yet reſolved to ſuppreſs. He would often ſend for me with vehement injunctions of haſte, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to ſay. And ſometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pauſe a few moments, and then diſmiſs me.

CHAP. XL.

THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS UNEASINESS.

AT laſt the time came when the ſecret burſt his reſerve. We were ſitting together laſt night in the turret of his houſe, watching the emerſion of a ſatellite of Jupiter. A ſudden tempeſt clouded the ſky, and diſappointed our obſervation. We ſat a while ſilent in the dark, and then he addreſſed himſelf to me in theſe words: "Imlac, I have long conſidered thy friendſhip as the greateſt bleſſing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and uſeleſs, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and

and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice in the hour of imbecility and pain to devolve it upon thee."

"I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested, that whatever could conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine."

"Hear Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of weather, and the distribution of the seasons: the sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from tropick to tropick by my direction; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated the fervours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator!"

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED.

"I SUPPOSE he difcovered in me, through the obfcurity of the room, fome tokens of amazement and doubt, for, after a fhort paufe, he proceeded thus:"

"Not to be eafily credited will neither furprife nor offend me; for I am, probably, the firft of human beings to whom this truft has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this diftinction a reward or punifhment; fince I have poffeffed it I have been far lefs happy than before, and nothing but the confcioufnefs of good intention could have enabled me to fupport the wearinefs of unremitted vigilance."

"How long, Sir, faid I, has this great office been in your hands?"

"About ten years ago, faid he, my daily obfervations of the changes of the fky led me to confider, whether, if I had the power of the feafons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation faftened on my mind, and I fat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the fhowers of fertility, and feconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of funfhine. I had yet only the will to do good, and did not imagine that I fhould ever have the power.

"One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a fudden wifh that

I could ſend rain on the ſouthern mountains, and raiſe the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall, and by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had liſtened to my lips."

"Might not ſome other cauſe, ſaid I, produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always riſe on the ſame day."

"Do not believe, ſaid he, with impatience, that ſuch objections could eſcape me: I reaſoned long againſt my own conviction, and laboured againſt truth with the utmoſt obſtinacy. I ſometimes ſuſpected myſelf of madneſs, and ſhould not have dared to impart this ſecret but to a man like you, capable of diſtinguiſhing the wonderful from the impoſſible, and the incredible from the falſe."

"Why, Sir, ſaid I, do you call that incredible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?"

"Becauſe, ſaid he, I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonſtration to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conſcious of its force. I, therefore, ſhall not attempt to gain credit by diſputation. It is ſufficient that I feel this power, that I have long poſſeſſed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is ſhort, the infirmities of age increaſe upon me, and the time will ſoon come, when the regulator of the year muſt mingle with the duſt. The care of appointing a ſucceſſor has long diſturbed me; the night and the day have been ſpent in compariſons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none ſo worthy as thyſelf."

CHAP. XLII.

THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS.

"HEAR, therefore, what I ſhall impart with attention, ſuch as the welfare of a world requires. If the taſk of a king be conſidered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what muſt be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me therefore with attention.

"I have diligently conſidered the poſition of the earth and ſun, and formed innumerable ſchemes in which I changed their ſituation. I have ſometimes turned aſide the axis of the earth, and ſometimes varied the ecliptick of the ſun: but I have found it impoſſible to make a diſpoſition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains, another loſes by an imaginable alteration, even without conſidering the diſtant parts of the ſolar ſyſtem with which we are unacquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy adminiſtration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not pleaſe thyſelf with thinking that thou canſt make thyſelf renowned to all future ages, by diſordering the ſeaſons. The memory of miſchief is no deſirable fame. Much leſs will it become thee to let kindneſs or intereſt prevail. Never rob other countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is ſufficient."

"I promiſed, that when I poſſeſſed the power, I would uſe it with inflexible integrity; and he diſmiſſed

miſſed me, preſſing my hand." "My heart, ſaid he, will be now at reſt, and my benevolence will no more deſtroy my quiet; I have found a man of wiſdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the ſun."

The prince heard this narration with very ſerious regard; but the princeſs ſmiled, and Pekuah convulſed herſelf with laughter. "Ladies, ſaid Imlac, to mock the heavieſt of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wiſe. Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practiſe his virtues; but all may ſuffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our preſent ſtate, the moſt dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reaſon."

The princeſs was recollected, and the favourite was abaſhed. Raſſelas, more deeply affected, inquired of Imlac, whether he thought ſuch maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted?

CHAP. XLIII.

THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION.

"DISORDERS of intellect, anſwered Imlac, happen much more often than ſuperficial obſervers will eaſily believe. Perhaps, if we ſpeak with rigorous exactneſs, no human mind is in its right ſtate. There is no man whoſe imagination does not ſometimes predominate over his reaſon, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whoſe ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whoſe mind airy notions do not ſometimes tyrannize, and force him to hope or

fear beyond the limits of ſober probability. All power of fancy over reaſon is a degree of inſanity; but while this power is ſuch as we can control and repreſs, it is not viſible to others, nor conſidered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madneſs but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences ſpeech or action.

"To indulge the power of fiction, and ſend imagination out upon the wing, is often the ſport of thoſe who delight too muuh in ſilent ſpeculation. When we are alone we are not always buſy; the labour of excogitation is too violent to laſt long; the ardour of inquiry will ſometimes give way to idleneſs or ſatiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, muſt find pleaſure in his own thoughts, and muſt conceive himſelf what he is not; for who is pleaſed with what he is? He then expatiates in boundleſs futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the preſent moment he ſhould moſt deſire, amuſes his deſires with impoſſible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion.' The mind dances from ſcene to ſcene, unites all pleaſures in all combinations, and riots in delights, which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot beſtow.

"In time, ſome particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected, the mind, in wearineſs or leiſure, recurs conſtantly to the favourite conception, and feaſts on the luſcious falſehood, whenever ſhe is offended with the bitterneſs of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; ſhe grows firſt imperious,

and

and in time despotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

"This, Sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer's misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom."

"I will no more, said the favourite, imagine myself the queen of Abissinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I, said the princess, will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have in my chamber heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat: sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes with my crook encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks"

"I will confess, said the prince, an indulgence of fantastick delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to image the pos-

ſibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong ſhould be reſtrained, all vice reformed, and all the ſubjects preſerved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable ſchemes of reformation, and dictated many uſeful regulations and ſalutary edicts. This has been the ſport, and ſometimes the labour, of my ſolitude; and I ſtart, when I think with how little anguiſh I once ſuppoſed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such, ſays Imlac, are the effects of viſionary ſchemes: when we firſt form them we know them to be abſurd, but familiarize them by degrees, and in time loſe ſight of their folly."

CHAP. XLIV.

THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN.

THE evening was now far paſt, and they roſe to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they ſaw at a ſmall diſtance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the aſſembly of the ſages. "Yonder, ſaid he, is one whoſe years have calmed his paſſions, but not clouded his reaſon: let us cloſe the diſquiſitions of the night, by inquiring what are his ſentiments of his own ſtate, that we may know whether youth alone is to ſtruggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the ſage approached and ſaluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met

one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way ſeemed ſhort in his company. He was pleaſed to find himſelf not diſregarded, accompanied them to their houſe, and, at the prince's requeſt, entered with them. They placed him in the ſeat of honour, and ſet wine and conſerves before him.

"Sir, ſaid the princeſs, an evening walk muſt give to a man of learning, like you, pleaſures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the cauſes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing muſt ſupply you with contemplation, and renew the conſciouſneſs of your own dignity."

"Lady, anſwered he, let the gay and the vigorous expect pleaſure in their excurſions; it is enough that age can obtain eaſe. To me the world has loſt its novelty: I look round, and ſee what I remember to have ſeen in happier days. I reſt againſt a tree, and conſider, that in the ſame ſhade I once diſputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now ſilent in the grave. I caſt my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the viciſſitudes of life. I have ceaſed to take much delight in phyſical truth; for what have I to do with thoſe things which I am ſoon to leave?"

"You may at leaſt recreate yourſelf, ſaid Imlac, with the recollection of an honourable and uſeful life, and enjoy the praiſe which all agree to give you."

"Praiſe, ſaid the ſage, with a ſigh, is to an old man an empty ſound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her ſon, nor wife to partake the honours of her huſband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my intereſt beyond myſelf. Youth is delighted with applauſe, becauſe it is conſidered as the earneſt of ſome future good, and becauſe the proſpect of life is far extended: but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet leſs to be hoped from their affection or eſteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be uſeleſs, and high employment would be pain. My retroſpect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time ſquandered upon trifles, and more loſt in idleneſs and vacancy. I leave many great deſigns unattempted, and many great attempts unfiniſhed. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compoſe myſelf to tranquillity; endeavour to abſtract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reaſon knows them to be vain, ſtill try to keep their old poſſeſſion of the heart; expect, with ſerene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to poſſeſs, in a better ſtate, that happineſs which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained."

He roſe and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince conſoled himſelf with remarking, that it was not

reaſonable

reaſonable to be diſappointed by this account; for age had never been conſidered as the ſeaſon of felicity, and if it was poſſible to be eaſy in decline and weakneſs, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy: that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princeſs ſuſpected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repreſs the expectations of thoſe who had newly entered the world. She had ſeen the poſſeſſors of eſtates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleaſure no longer than they can confine it to themſelves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection: or elſe ſuppoſed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore diſcontented: "For nothing, ſaid ſhe, is more common, than to call our own condition the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no deſire to ſee them depreſſed, ſmiled at the comforts which they could ſo readily procure to themſelves, and remembered, that at the ſame age, he was equally confident of unmingled proſperity, and equally fertile of conſolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itſelf would too ſoon impreſs. The princeſs and her lady retired; the madneſs of the aſtronomer hung upon their minds, and they deſired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the riſing of the ſun.

CHAP. XLV.

THE PRINCESS AND PEKUAH VISIT THE ASTRONOMER.

THE princeſs and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's aſtronomer, thought his character at once ſo amiable and ſo ſtrange, that they could not be ſatisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requeſted to find the means of bringing them together.

This was ſomewhat difficult; the philoſopher had never received any viſits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refuſed, and ſeveral ſchemes were propoſed for the accompliſhment of their deſign. It was propoſed to introduce them as ſtrangers in diſtreſs, to whom the ſage was always acceſſible; but, after ſome deliberation, it appeared, that by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed, for their converſation would be ſhort, and they could not decently importune him often. "This, ſaid Raſſelas, is true; but I have yet a ſtronger objection againſt the miſrepreſentation of your ſtate. I have always conſidered it as treaſon againſt the great republick of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him whether on great or little occaſions. All impoſture weakens confidence, and chills benevolence. When the ſage finds that you are not what you ſeemed, he will feel the reſentment natural

to a man who, confcious of great abilities, difcovers that he has been tricked by underftandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the diftruft, which he can never afterwards wholly lay afide, may ftop the voice of counfel, and clofe the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of reftoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himfelf?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiofity would fubfide; but, next day, Pekuah told him, fhe had now found an honeft pretence for a vifit to the aftronomer, for fhe would folicit permiffion to continue under him the ftudies in which fhe had been initiated by the Arab, and the princefs might go with her either as a fellow-ftudent, or becaufe a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid, faid Imlac, that he will be foon weary of your company: men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditrefs." "That, faid Pekuah, muft be my care: I afk of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and, by concurring always with his opinions, I fhall make him think it greater than it is."

The aftronomer, in purfuance of this refolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in fearch of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was defirous to become his fcholar. The uncommonnefs of the propofal raifed at once his furprife and curiofity; and when, after a fhort deliberation, he con-

ſented to admit her, he could not ſtay without impa-
tience till the next day.

The ladies dreſſed themſelves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the aſtronomer, who was pleaſed to ſee himſelf approached with reſpect by perſons of ſo ſplendid an appearance. In the exchange of the firſt civilities he was timorous and baſhful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and juſtified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what could have turned her inclination towards aſtronomy? he received from her a hiſtory of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time paſſed in the Arab's iſland. She told her tale with eaſe and elegance, and her converſation took poſſeſſion of his heart. The diſcourſe was then turned to aſtronomy: Pekuah diſplayed what ſhe knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to deſiſt from a ſtudy which ſhe had ſo happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The ſage endeavoured to amuſe them, that they might prolong their viſits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of ſolicitude vaniſhed by degrees, as he forced himſelf to entertain them, and he grieved when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the ſeaſons.

The princeſs and her favourite had now watched his lips for ſeveral months, and could not catch a ſingle word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commiſſion. They often contrived to bring

him to an open declaration; but he eaſily eluded all their attacks, and on which ſide ſoever they preſſed him, eſcaped from them to ſome other topick.

As their familiarity increaſed, they invited him often to the houſe of Imlac, where they diſtinguiſhed him by extraordinary reſpect. He began gradually to delight in ſublunary pleaſures. He came early, and departed late; laboured to recommend himſelf by aſſiduity and compliance; excited their curioſity after new arts, that they might ſtill want his aſſiſtance; and when they made any excurſion of pleaſure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wiſdom, the prince and his ſiſter were convinced that he might be truſted without danger; and leſt he ſhould draw any falſe hopes from the civilities which he received, diſcovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey; and required his opinion on the choice of life.

"Of the various conditions which the world ſpreads before you, which you ſhall prefer, ſaid the ſage, I am not able to inſtruct you. I can only tell that I have choſen wrong. I have paſſed my time in ſtudy without experience; in the attainment of ſciences which can, for the moſt part, be but remotely uſeful to mankind. I have purchaſed knowledge at the expence of all the common comforts of life: I have miſſed the endearing elegance of female friendſhip, and the happy commerce of domeſtick tenderneſs. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other ſtudents, they have been accompanied with fear, diſquiet, and ſcrupuloſity; but even of

theſe

these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in errour, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations which furnished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours, said he, my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's

conversation,

conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrours which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favour myself in a known errour, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!"

" No disease of the imagination, answered Imlac, is so difficult of cure, as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places, that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain, but when melancholick notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

" But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the

light,

light, which from time to time, breaks in upon you: when ſcruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not ſtand to parley, but fly to buſineſs or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the maſs of humanity, and have neither ſuch virtue nor vice, as that you ſhould be ſingled out for ſupernatural favours or afflictions."

CHAP. XLVI.

THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPICK.

"ALL this, ſaid the aſtronomer, I have often thought, but my reaſon has been ſo long ſubjugated by an uncontrolable and overwhelming idea, that it durſt not confide in its own deciſions. I now ſee how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by ſuffering chimeras to prey upon me in ſecret; but melancholy ſhrinks from communication, and I never found a man before, to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own ſentiments confirmed by yours, who are not eaſily deceived, and can have no motive or purpoſe to deceive. I hope that time and variety will diſſipate the gloom that has ſo long ſurrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be ſpent in peace."

"Your learning and virtue, ſaid Imlac, may juſtly give you hopes."

Raſſelas then entered with the princeſs and Pekuah, and inquired, whether they had contrived any new diverſion for the next day? "Such, ſaid Nekayah,

kayah, is the ſtate of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itſelf is nothing; when we have made it, the next wiſh is to change again. The world is not yet exhauſted; let me ſee ſomething to-morrow which I never ſaw before."

"Variety, ſaid Raſſelas, is ſo neceſſary to content, that even the happy valley diſguſted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myſelf with impatience, when I ſaw the monks of St. Anthony ſupport, without complaint, a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardſhip."

"Thoſe men, anſwered Imlac, are leſs wretched in their ſilent convent than the Abiſſinian princes in their priſon of pleaſure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reaſonable motive. Their labour ſupplies them with neceſſaries; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another ſtate, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly diſtributed; one duty ſucceeds another, ſo that they are not left open to the diſtraction of unguided choice, nor loſt in the ſhades of liſtleſs inactivity. There is a certain taſk to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, becauſe they conſider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endleſs felicity."

"Do you think, ſaid Nekayah, that the monaſtick rule is a more holy and leſs imperfect ſtate than any other? May not he equally hope for future happineſs who converſes openly with mankind, who ſuc-

cours the diſtreſſed by his charity, inſtructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his induſtry to the general ſyſtem of life; even though he ſhould omit ſome of the mortifications which are practiſed in the cloiſter, and allow himſelf ſuch harmleſs delights as his condition may place within his reach?"

"This, ſaid Imlac, is a queſtion which has long divided the wiſe, and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monaſtery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to ſtem the temptations of publick life; and if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewiſe little ſtrength to reſiſt evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adverſity, and are willing to eject thoſe paſſions which have long buſied them in vain. And many are diſmiſſed by age and diſeaſes from the more laborious duties of ſociety. In monaſteries the weak and timorous may be happily ſheltered, the weary may repoſe, and the penitent may meditate. Thoſe retreats of prayer and contemplation have ſomething ſo congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is ſcarcely one that does not propoſe to cloſe his life in pious abſtraction with a few aſſociates ſerious as himſelf."

"Such, ſaid Pekuah, has often been my wiſh, and I have heard the princeſs declare, that ſhe ſhould not willingly die in a crowd."

"The liberty of uſing harmleſs pleaſures, proceeded Imlac, will not be diſputed; but it is ſtill to be

be examined what pleaſures are harmleſs. The evil of any pleaſure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itſelf, but in its conſequences. Pleaſure, in itſelf harmleſs, may become miſchievous, by endearing to us a ſtate which we know to be tranſient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itſelf, nor has any other uſe, but that it diſengages us from the allurements of ſenſe. In the ſtate of future perfection, to which we all aſpire, there will be pleaſure without danger, and ſecurity without reſtraint."

The princeſs was ſilent, and Raſſelas, turning to the aſtronomer, aſked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by ſhewing her ſomething which ſhe had not ſeen before."

"Your curioſity, ſaid the ſage, has been ſo general, and your purſuit of knowledge ſo vigorous, that novelties are not now very eaſily to be found: but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the ancient repoſitories, in which the bodies of the earlieſt generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not, ſaid Raſſelas, what pleaſure the ſight of the catacombs can afford; but, ſince nothing elſe offered, I am reſolved to view them, and ſhall place this with many other things which I have done, becauſe I would do ſomething."

They hired a guard of horſemen, and the next day viſited the catacombs. When they were about to deſcend into the ſepulchral caves, "Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, we are now again invading the habitations of the dead; I know that you will ſtay behind; let me find you ſafe when I return." No, I will not be left, anſwered Pekuah; I will go down between you and the prince."

They then all deſcended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of ſubterraneous paſſages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either ſide.

CHAP. XLVII.

IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

"WHAT reaſon, ſaid the prince, can be given, why the Egyptians ſhould thus expenſively preſerve thoſe carcaſes which ſome nations conſume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their ſight, as ſoon as decent rites can be performed?"

"The original of ancient cuſtoms, ſaid Imlac, is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cauſe has ceaſed; and concerning ſuperſtitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reaſon did not dictate, reaſon cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming aroſe only from tenderneſs to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined, becauſe it ſeems impoſſible that this care ſhould have been general: had all the dead been embalmed,

embalmed, their repoſitories muſt in time have been more ſpacious than the dwellings of the living. I ſuppoſe only the rich or honourable were ſecured from corruption, and the reſt left to the courſe of nature.

"But it is commonly ſuppoſed that the Egyptians believed the ſoul to live as long as the body continued undiſſolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wiſe Egyptians, ſaid Nekayah, think ſo groſsly of the ſoul? If the ſoul could once ſurvive its ſeparation, what could it afterwards receive or ſuffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would doubtleſs think erroneouſly, ſaid the aſtronomer, in the darkneſs of heatheniſm, and the firſt dawn of philoſophy. The nature of the ſoul is ſtill diſputed amidſt all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: ſome yet ſay, that it may be material, who, nevertheleſs, believe it to be immortal."

"Some, anſwered Imlac, have indeed ſaid that the ſoul is material, but I can ſcarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the concluſions of reaſon enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of ſenſe and inveſtigations of ſcience concur to prove the unconſciouſneſs of matter.

"It was never ſuppoſed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we ſuppoſe to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, denſity, bulk, motion,

and

and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialists, said the astronomer, urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine, returned Imlac, against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not, said the astronomer, too arrogantly limit the Creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence, replied the poet, to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another, that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false, that the same number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not, ſaid Nekayah, any great uſe of this queſtion. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have ſufficiently proved, neceſſarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality, ſaid Imlac, our ideas are negative, and therefore obſcure. Immateriality ſeems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a conſequence of exemption from all cauſes of decay: whatever periſhes is deſtroyed by the ſolution of its contexture, and ſeparation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no ſolution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not, ſaid Raſſelas, how to conceive any thing without extenſion; what is extended muſt have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be deſtroyed."

"Conſider your own conceptions, replied Imlac, and the difficulty will be leſs. You will find ſubſtance without extenſion. An ideal form is no leſs real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extenſion. It is no leſs certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind poſſeſſes the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itſelf is ſtanding. What ſpace does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea ſuffer laceration? As is the effect, ſuch is the cauſe: as thought, ſuch is the power that thinks; a power impaſſive and indiſcerptible."

"But the Being, ſaid Nekayah, whom I fear to name, the Being which made the ſoul, can deſtroy it."

"He,

“ He, ſurely, can deſtroy it, anſwered Imlac, ſince however unperiſhable, it receives from a ſuperior nature its power of duration. That it will not periſh by any inherent cauſe of decay, or principle of corruption, may be ſhewn by philoſophy; but philoſophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we muſt humbly learn from higher authority.”

The whole aſſembly ſtood awhile ſilent and collected. “ Let us return, ſaid Raſſelas, from this ſcene of mortality. How gloomy would be theſe manſions of the dead to him who did not know that he ſhould never die; that what now acts ſhall continue its agency, and what now thinks ſhall think on for ever. Thoſe that lie here ſtretched before us, the wiſe and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the ſhortneſs of our preſent ſtate: they were, perhaps, ſnatched away while they were buſy like us in the choice of life.”

“ To me, ſaid the princeſs, the choice of life is become leſs important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity.”

They then haſtened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVIII.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS CONCLUDED.

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their viſit to the catacombs, the river began to riſe.

They were confined to their houſe. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excurſions, and, being well ſupplied with materials for talk, they diverted themſelves with compariſons of the different forms of life which they had obſerved, and with various ſchemes of happineſs, which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never ſo much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab reſtored her to the princeſs, and wiſhed only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioreſs of the order: ſhe was weary of expectation and diſguſt, and would gladly be fixed in ſome unvariable ſtate.

The princeſs thought, that of all ſublunary things knowledge was the beſt: ſhe deſired firſt to learn all ſciences, and then purpoſed to found a college of learned women, in which ſhe would preſide, that, by converſing with the old, and educating the young, ſhe might divide her time between the acquiſition and communication of wiſdom, and raiſe up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince deſired a little kingdom, in which he might adminiſter juſtice in his own perſon, and ſee

all the parts of government with his own eyes; he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his ſubjects.

Imlac and the aſtronomer were contented to be driven along the ſtream of life, without directing their courſe to any particular port.

Of theſe wiſhes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and reſolved, when the inundation ſhould ceaſe, to return to Abiſſinia.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.